R Bourreau Deslandes (a 7.)

# Dying Merrily:

OR,

HISTORICAL and CRITICAL

# REFLEXIONS

ON THE

# CONDUCT

OF

## *Great Men* in all Ages,

Who, in their laſt Moments, mock'd *Death*, and died facetiouſly.

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*By Monſieur* DESLANDES,

And tranſlated from the *French* by

*T. W.*——— *A. M.*

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———*Quos ille timorum*
*Maximus haud urget lethi metu: inde ruendi*
*In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces*
*Mortis*—— LUCAN.

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# THE Tranſlator's PREFACE.

*THE Deſign of tranſlating the following Book was not to encourage any ſtupid Indifference, or unbecoming Levity concerning Death, that awful and ſolemn Cataſtrophe of human Nature; but to let us ſee what an odd, unaccountable Creature Man often is; and how ſtrangely turn'd many of the human Species are, who, without being ſupported by the Spirit of Religion, can not only look unconcernedly, but be jocoſe, and talk facetiouſly at the near Approach of their Deaths.*

*Several Reaſons, I believe, might be aſſign'd for ſuch Diſpoſitions, and a Conduct ſo unmeaning; but one of the moſt general is this, that a natural Levity and Gayety is ſo ſtrong in ſome People, that it will not*

*check itself or be suppress'd by just and unanswerable Considerations; nor will comport itself properly, even in Circumstances of Distress, or on Occasions which require the greatest Seriousness, but will break out, and make itself flash and glare, notwithstanding all the Gloom and Horror of the Scene in which it is involv'd.*

*This Humour, which is in the Blood, rules and predominates in the Constitution of the Person, and marks and characterises him from the very Beginning to the End of Life. Thus it is, that all our Passions, left unsubdued, and not properly regulated, will have the same Tendencies, and retain the same Tincture in all the Variety of worldly Occurrences, and all the different Stages of human Life. Thus a fiery Disposition will always remain fiery, a covetous one always covetous, a satyrical one always satyrical, and he who is peculiarly turn'd for Wit and Humour, will always be witty and humorous. Thus what* Horace *lays down*

*down as a Rule for Poets, in regard to each Character they painted,*

———Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, & ſibi conſtet,

*is founded in a juſt Obſervation on human Nature, which in every Individual generally retains its Identity of Diſpoſition, which it carries along with it to the laſt; and in this is ever uniform and conſiſtent with itſelf. Mere Reaſon is too weak to make a Conqueſt, and the Torrent of the Paſſions is too ſtrong to be ſtemm'd or repuls'd by it.*

Naturam expellas furca tamen uſque recurret.

*Nature generally prevails in ſpite of Reaſon, but when join'd by Habit, it is uncontroulable. Whatever was the Caſt or Bent of Thought of a Man all his Life, he will retain the ſame in his laſt Moments. Of this we have a late Inſtance, confirming that Man never ſwerves from his natural Diſpoſition. It may be ſeen by the following Lines, which are ſaid to have been made* extempore, *by the late lamented Mr.*

*Mr.* Pope, *in the Extremity of his laſt Pangs, on a certain Phyſician, whom he was perſwaded to make uſe of againſt his own Opinion, that he ſupported the Character of a Wit, a Poet, and Satyriſt to the laſt.*

*Dunces rejoice, forgive Offences paſt,*
*T—— the Dunce has done your Work at laſt.*

*Tho' theſe Lines be imputed to that melodious, dying, poetic Swan, the Flatneſs of them would make me ſuſpect them to be by a leſs harmonious Pen; but we could bring many other unqueſtionable Inſtances of that great Man's continuing his Wit and Humour to his lateſt Moments.*

*Readers of a grave Caſt of Mind ought not to be offended at the Publication of this little Volume; for no greater Injury can reſult from publiſhing in Print the unſeaſonable, unmeaning Levities of dying Perſons, in regard to Death and Futurity, than from relating them in common Converſation, which is practis'd daily by the Serious*

*Serious and Pious. They may be mention'd without being approv'd, as they may be liſten'd to without corrupting or vitiating the Heart.*

*The Peruſal of this Treatiſe may divert the Mind and improve the Underſtanding by its Variety and Erudition, but can have no more Effect upon a Mind well-diſpos'd, than a pleaſant Tale related agreeably. And as for Minds of another Stamp, I don't ſee why it ſhould be apprehended that any thing in this Book ſhould make that worſe, which our beſt Divines have not been able to mend. This was certainly the Opinion in* France, *where no Books are printed and ſold publickly, as this was, that have a Tendency to pervert the Mind. Yet this Work was printed publickly at* Rochefort, *a Town near* Rochelle, *in* 1714, *during the Reign of* Lewis XIV. *a Prince who, in his latter Days eſpecially, permitted no Liberties injurious to Religion.*

*The Author, Monſieur* Deſlandes, *has publiſhed too many curious and uſeful Works, and is too well known to all the*

*the Learned of* Europe, *to need any other mention than his bare Name to be made of him on this Occaſion. The Reader will be better acquainted by peruſing this Tract, with his Character for Taſte, Judgment, and Learning, than by any Picture I could draw of him.*

*I have added, by way of Appendix, ſeveral Sayings which the Author has omitted from the ancient Heathens, moſt of which are entertaining, none of them diſpleaſing, ſome of them are very humorous and witty, but none of them profane, and all of them agreeable enough conſidering the Times in which they lived, and the Lights by which they were guided. And I conclude with the Recital of a known Fact that happen'd not far from us, in the preſent Century, which every* Engliſhman *ſhould treaſure up in his Mind; it being for Slaves, and not Freemen, to dread or ſhun Death, when their Country requires that Life ſhould be freely expos'd to preſerve its Freedom and Independency.*

THE

# PREFACE.

*HOWEVER whimſical the Modern Taſte be, yet is an Author, who would pleaſe the Public, oblig'd to conform himſelf to it. The World is already tired with Books wrote in the Stile of Monſieur* de Rochefoucault, *or Monſieur* de la Bruyere; *that is, with ſuch as contain Select Maxims, or Moral Reflexions. Works of Gallantry, and in general all thoſe that have the Air of Romance, are no longer in vogue; and* Truth *ſeems to be preferr'd to the moſt agreeable and flattering Probability.*

*I am ſenſible that the Study of Philoſophy is much in faſhion. Such Works as combat human Prejudices, and elucidate abſtruſe Points, will always be well received by the Intelligent and Curious; the nobleſt Efforts of human Wit being thoſe which conduce to perfectioning the Reaſon of Man. But for my part, conſcious of my own Inability for ſo arduous a Taſk, I have ſtruck out a new Path, endeavouring by a new Method to merit the Approbation of the Learned. How Philoſophick ſoever the Age be, a happy Medley of Learning and Criticiſm will be reliſh'd, provided it be equally free from the Dryneſs of Compilers, and the Affectation of Pedantry. Such is the* Medium *I thought myſelf obliged to, and endeavoured to obſerve, that the following Treatiſe might pleaſe by its Spirit and Vivacity.*

*Perhaps it may be objected, that the Tract is overcharg'd with Citations; which I own to be a Fault, but ſuch*

*a*

*a one as is the more excuſable for its being inevitable. The Nature of the Subject requiring that I ſhould ſtrengthen myſelf with the Teſtimony of many ancient and modern Authors, I confeſs to have produced them in their native Dreſſes; but it was never but when I could not, or thought I could not make them ſpeak* French *ſo beautifully and gracefully as in the Original. The Politeneſs of the* Roman *Writers, and the Atticiſm of the* Greeks, *are Things ſo very delicate, that they may be eaſily loſt in a Tranſlation: and one ſhould be as conſcious of his own Force, as Monſieur* d'Ablancourt *was, to attempt naturalizing the Apophthegms of the Ancients.*

*As my Deſign was neither to jeſt continually, nor be always ſerious, 'tis to be hop'd the Reader will find as much Variety in the Piece as he would wiſh: For let me ſay, with his leave, that I have purpoſely affected Diſorder in the Arrangement of my Subject,*

*that it might have the greater Air of Novelty and Briſkneſs. A too ſcrupulous Regularity ſeldom pleaſes, and generally ſurfeits in the end; whereas a little Confuſion ſurprizes the Imagination, and invites it to fix its natural Levity. There are certain Points of view which are ſought only for the Pleaſure of meeting Objects, whereof the Variety conſiſts, or rather abounds in Whim and Caprice; and even Art ſometimes comes to the Aid of Nature, in order to inlarge the agreeable Confuſion, and to give Proof of her own Force and Uſefulneſs.*

*It will be thought, I fear, that this Work was wrote far from* Paris, *where choice Books were as ſcarce as unknown. And how ſhall I deſtroy this Suppoſition? For* Livy *himſelf, learned and ſkilful as he was, never could diveſt himſelf of a certain Ruſticity he had contracted at* Padua. *There is a nameleſs Something, a native Indelicacy of Phraſe contracted in the Provinces, which communicates itſelf*

*to*

*to the moſt labour'd Performances of Literature.*

(*a*) ——Grave virus
Munditiæ pepulêre: ſed in longum tamen ævum
Manſerunt, hodiéque manent veſtigia ruris.

Horace, *who makes the Obſervation, was too well acquainted with the Stiffneſs and too great Formality of the New-comers to* Rome, *to be miſtaken. It ought not therefore to be wonder'd at, if the Reader does not meet in this Work all the Excellencies and Beauties with which it might be embelliſh'd. They who are at the Source of Literature, and at liberty to conſult the beſt Libraries, may be ſaid to be obliged to entertain the Publick with Art and Delicacy, when they publiſh their Productions. But it is otherwiſe with an Author reſident far from the Capital;*



(*a*) Epiſt. 1. l. 2.

*pital; there is no Motive to his Emulation, and he rarely converſes with the Learned and Refin'd. All the World have not ſo fertile and happy a Memory as* Jerome Magius, *who, tho' a cloſe Priſoner in* Turkey, *and deſtitute of all Books and Helps, wrote two Treatiſes that are even now admir'd by the Learned.*

*It remains only for me to pay court to a certain Species of Criticks of a vexatious and melancholy Diſpoſition, and hard to be pleas'd, who may ſtartle, and be ſcandaliz'd at the Title of this Book. Why, ſay they, ſhall the Publick be entertain'd with Trifles? Why ſhould precious Time be thus miſpent? To ſo trite a Criticiſm, I ſhall only ſay, that if the Publick requires and reliſhes Works of profound Erudition, or Treatiſes of Morality only, this may paſs for unprofitable. But by theſe ſerious Gentlemen's Leave, is it not allow'd a Man ſometimes to ſport and laugh? Is one oblig'd to tie himſelf down always to*

*the*

*the Study of grave and ſerious Subjects? I take Monſieur* de la Fontaine *for my Model in this Excuſe to the Publick. He makes uſe of it in his Preface to his fine and original Pieces of Poetry. Ought I then, after this, to dread the Malice of theſe Criticks; or ought I not rather to dread their Wrath, for having diſappointed them, by having thus anſwered their Objections before-hand?*

# REFLEXIONS
## ON THE
# CONDUCT
## OF
# GREAT MEN
## That have died Merrily.

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To my FRIEND

Monſieur DE LA CH——.

YOU will ſoon perceive, my dear Friend, that this little Work is but an Extract of thoſe long and agreeable Converſations we had together during our Stay at ———. Whilſt others were diverting themſelves at Play,

or after the Hounds, we were wrap'd up in Contemplations upon Death. And let me ſay, that it was an Occupation well ſuited to the Stoiciſm we profeſs. But ſhould any of our modern formal Criticks find fault with us, let us e'en ſe d him to the ingenious Author of the *Plurality of Worlds*. A Lady ſhall employ her Time in the Country, and feel exquiſite Pleaſure in the Study of Aſtronomy; and why ſhall we be afraid of having it known that we employ our Moments as ſeriouſly as her Ladyſhip? But ſay the truth, our Seriouſneſs has ſomewhat the Air of Debauchery; at leaſt it might paſs for a Debauch among thoſe enamour'd with ſpiritual Debauchery.

You may remember, that the Converſation turn'd chiefly on thoſe who had exerted their livelieſt Fancies at the Approach of Death, and, as it were, play'd and ſported with it. Are not the Ideas ariſing from this Subject agreeable and diverting? But they have beſides, the Advantage of being quite new, which is no ſmall Addition to modern Works. Let us not reckon on any Aſſiſtance from honeſt *Raviſius Textor*, who had compiled

a long Catalogue of *(a)* Great Men that died by too exceſſive laughing. The good Man might have meant well, but he was injudicious and unlearn'd. In vain alſo ſhall we recur to the *Hiſtoria Ludicra* of *Balthazar Bonifacias*, or to other Collections under the like Titles. I have examin'd all theſe, and many other Works with as ſpecious Titles, but met with no Materials proper for the Conſtruction of this Work. And let me add, that the Diſappointment, inſtead of inſpiring Uneaſineſs, added to my Satisfaction, becauſe I ſhould be ſorry to deck myſelf with the Spoils of others. Let me only impart to you a Deſire of *Montagne*'s, which is a Proof of the Excellency of his Taſte. He wiſh'd for Erudition enough to be able to draw a compleat Abridgment of the moſt tranſcendent *Deaths* mention'd in Hiſtory.

This ſo laudable a Deſign of that Great Man's, I execute in part, to which I can't doubt of your Approbation, as being one of his warmeſt Admirers. After all, where can the real Man be ſo well known as in the Bed of Death?



*(a) Theatrum Hiſtoricum, lib.* 2.

There is the Point of View in which I would place him, who would judge impartially of the Ridiculouſneſs that reigns in the World. 'Tis there where a Man neceſſarily undeceives himſelf of the Chimeras and Impertinencies with which Mankind is ſo ſillily employ'd. We are all of us Fools or Madmen: The Folly of ſome is more petulant and impetuous, that of others more tranquil and ſerene. Mine may be to write; and who knows but that of the Publick may be to criticiſe me?

But let me not, my Friend, fatigue you, or myſelf, with vain Ceremonies and Compliments. You know me to be an Enemy to that tireſome Language, which you hate no leſs, as being of the Invention of Flattery and Deceit. I ſhall only add, that they of your Acquaintance, who have themſelves the greateſt Delicacy of Taſte, are thoſe who feel the moſt exquiſite Pleaſure in your Converſation.

CHAP.

## CHAP. I.

### DEATH *is more to be wiſh'd for than dreaded.*

THERE is no diſputing that the Bitterneſs exceeds the Sweets of Life. For one Day enjoy'd with Eaſe and Serenity, there are forty in which we feel ſenſibly the Pangs of Grief and Pain. I ſhould be inclin'd to think that Man was not made to be happy, at leaſt in this Life. If in his Youth he enjoys ſome Comfort, Nature is ſure to indemnify herſelf with Intereſt in an advanc'd Age. Thus does ſhe make us pay dearly for the momentary Pleaſures of Youth, the Value of which we know not till after they are no more. But what do I ſay? Is not even this Age of Pleaſure a Stage of Life we ought to be aſham'd of? Then are we incapable of Reflexion; we hunt after noxious Pleaſures; and even *Reaſon* is forc'd to yield. Should that Directreſs reſiſt for ſome time, is ſhe not ſo continually affronted and hector'd by the Paſſions, that at laſt ſhe becomes a Scare-crow, unheeded and undreaded?

Such

Such is the Portrait drawn by the delicate Pen of Madam *Deſhoulieres*, in one of thoſe Moments wherein the Mind is leſs affected than the Heart.

*Homme, vante moins ta Raiſon.*
*Vois l'inutilité de ce preſent celeſte,*
*Pour qui tu dois, dit on, mépriſer tout le reſte.*
*Auſſi foible que toi, dans ta jeune ſaiſon,*
*Elle eſt chancellante, imbecille.*
*Dans l'age où tout l'appelle à des plaiſirs divers,*
*Vile eſclave des ſens, elle t'eſt inutile :*
*Quand le ſort t'a laiſſé compter cinquante hivers,*
*Elle n'eſt qu'en chagrins fertile ;*
*Et quand tu vieillis, tu la perds.*

*Man, brag leſs of your Reaſon. Behold the Uſeleſsneſs of this divine Preſent, for which, it is ſaid, you ought to deſpiſe all others. In thy tender Youth, being as weak as yourſelf, ſhe is changeable and ſilly. In the next Stage of Life, when all Objects invite to Pleaſure, ſhe becomes a Slave to the Senſes, (Paſſions) and is conſequently*

*ſequently uſeleſs to thee. When Chance permits thee to arrive to the Age of fifty, then is ſhe moſt fruitful in Cares and Sorrows: And when you advance to old Age, ſhe vaniſhes.*

One can't enough ſtudy *Man* in the different Stages of Life. What a Throng of Paſſions is he aſſaulted by at one Time! And what a Crowd of Weakneſſes and Follies ſurround him at another! One muſt certainly be greatly ingroſs'd by Self-Love, not to feel a ſenſible Concern for the Unhappineſs of his Condition. For my part, I am not at all ſurpriz'd that no Man is contented with his Lot: For, not being wholly under the Government of *Reaſon*, there can be no true Satisfaction in the World. Though a Man enjoys perfect Health, and that he ſwims in a Sea of Pleaſures, is he for all that exempt from thoſe ſort of Inquietudes which accompany a Delicacy of Taſte? Health, properly, is but a State of Indolence; it awakens no lively Sentiments in the Mind, but leaves the Soul in a Sort of Idleneſs and Inactivity; which takes away the Reliſh of the Poſſeſſion of Health which a Man enjoys. And this probably ariſes from Man's Inſenſibility

ſibility of the Advantages he actually enjoys, more than thoſe he expects with Impatience.

I ſuppoſe, with Satisfaction, that the Univerſe contains a certain Quantity of Good and Evil; which, in one ſenſe, renders the Condition of all men equal. If Kings enjoy more Pleaſure than their Subjects, they are more ſenſibly affected with Events that cauſe Anguiſh and Inquietude. Who, in his Time, was more happy at *Rome* than *Cicero?* His Eloquence had rais'd him to the moſt eminent Stations in the Commonwealth; and, in thoſe Days, Eloquence was deem'd the higheſt Perfection: Yet, at the Time that he was higheſt in the Eſteem of the Senate and the whole People, he was moſt unable to taſte the Sweets of his Happineſs, being unconſolable for the Death of his Daughter *Tullia.* Is not this Diſpoſition of Mind evidently diſcernable in his Letter to *Atticus? Nothing can adminiſter Comfort to me at preſent; and I hate the Gods that had till now heap'd too largely their Bleſſings upon me.* Could we weigh twenty Conveniences againſt one Inconveniency, it would be often found that the Scale of the firſt would kick up into the Air.

The

The Condition of another appears more agreeable to a Man than his own, only becauſe he is leſs acquainted with it. It may be reſembled to thoſe diſtant Figures in Opticks, which repreſent a Town or a Houſe, but appear, on a near View, to be a confus'd Group of coarſe, ill-deſign'd Strokes of the Pencil. How beautifully has *Horace* touch'd this Subject!

(a) *Qui fit, Mæcenas, ut nemo quam tibi ſortem,*
*Seu ratio dederit, ſeu fors objecerit, illa*
*Contentus vivat? laudet diverſa ſequentes? &c.*

*How comes it*, Mæcenas, *that no Man is contented with his Condition, and that he eſteems more that of another than his own, whether he himſelf had choſen his way of Life, or it be the Work of Chance?* — The moſt eminent and delightful Station of Life, prevents not even Queens to envy ſometimes the Condition of Shepherdeſſes; ſuch, for inſtance, as is painted in the (b) *Aſtria*. In Love they ſeek only the Indulgence of the ſecret Inclination of the Heart; whereas a Princeſs is often made the

(a) Satyr. 1. lib. 1.

(b) A beautiful Romance wrote by the Baron *d'Urfiy*.

the Victim of Ambition or Policy. Such are the Conſequences of that falſe Honour to which we are Slaves.

As for the Learned, 'tis well known that they have a ſort of Right by Preſcription to fall out with *Fortune*. *Diogenes* is reborn in every Age; and his Tub is but too often the Inheritance of a ſuperior Genius. Herein there appears a kind of Fatality, of which however no Man dares complain; for Misfortunes inſpire a certain poignant, ſprightly Air, which ſeldom accompanies Proſperity. The Muſes, for inſtance, are never ſo flowing and harmonious, as when they are preſs'd down by ſome Grief or Sorrow. And tho' I hazard the being cenſur'd, perhaps ridicul'd, I can't help preferring the exil'd *Ovid* to *Ovid* in the midſt of Courts, Gallantries and Pleaſures. May I not be liken'd in ſome meaſure to the Emperor *Caligula*, who happening to ſee a Comedian whip'd, thought the Puniſhment had ſo ſoften'd and ſweeten'd his Voice, that he order'd it to be continued?

I ſhan't attempt here to write the Hiſtory of the learned Men that had complain'd of their ill Luck. Let it ſuffice the Curious, that *Pierius Valerianus*, and

*Thomas*

*Thomas Spizelius*, the one in *Italy*, the other in *Germany*, have wrote feelingly and elegantly on the Misfortunes of Men of Letters.

Since, then, there is no ſuch thing as Content, or a happy Condition in the World, one might, without adminiſtring to the Surprize of another, be allow'd to be out of Conceit with Life. Life is depicable enough in itſelf; but to the Diſcerning it muſt certainly appear ſo. *La Mothe le Vayer* acted a flattering Part in *France*: He abounded in Wit and Learning, and in the Goods of Fortune; yet was he ſo weary of his own Condition, and ſo ſenſible of that of Mankind in general, that he would be ſorry to be oblig'd to go over his Years again. In one of his Letters he ſays, " I would not ex-
" change the three miſerable Days I have
" to live, tho' in a very advanc'd Age,
" for all thoſe long Years, which an in-
" finite Number of Youth promiſe them-
" ſelves to ſpend in ſuch Pleaſures as I
" have already taſted.

In reality, we ſhould look upon ourſelves as being on a great Theatre, and having a Part in the Comedy which is acted in the World. The Parts of ſome are

of

of greater length or more ſhining, and thoſe others ſhorter and more obſcure; but all the Parts are equally fatiguing and ridiculous. He who would know what will happen in the moſt diſtant Futurity, has but to obſerve what paſſes in the courſe of one Year. The whole is but one Round, and all the Events are the ſame, but combin'd and link'd together in a different manner.

Could a Man view or conceive the Extravagancies of Mankind at full Length, how happy would he think himſelf to be from amongſt them? Is not the beholding a Throng of Viſionaries, who ride poſt after Chimeras, who embarraſs themſelves about Trifles, who hate at Night what they loved in the Morning, who ſlay one another for an Inch of Earth; Is not, I ſay, ſo fantaſtic a View enough to put a Man out of Conceit with the World? It would be ſome Alleviation, if Men were happy enough to be ignorant that they are ridiculous; but too much Pains has been taken to ſet their Deformity full in their Sight, for them to plead ſuch happy Ignorance. To what end are the wiſeſt of our Reflections, but to convince us of our Weakneſſes and Follies? This

would

would ſeem a Confirmation of the Buffooneries of *Momus*, who pretended that the Gods being drunk with Nectar when they made *Man*, they could not forbear laughing at their Handy-work in their ſober Moments.

It is eaſily perceivable that the Weak only are liable to be terrify'd at the Approach of Death; and that to be above the Apprehenſions of it, it requires only that a Man be tolerably reaſonable. A moderate good Taſte, and ſome Knowledge of the World, ſet a Man preſently above thoſe ridiculous Terrors which work ſo much on the Vulgar. If a Man ſhould maturely conſult that Philoſophy which has pure Morals and Virtue for its Objects, how deſpiſable would Life ſeem to him? Perhaps I ſhall be told, that there are but very few in the World who ſee the Approach of Death without Terror. But have I taken upon me to aſſert that there are many reaſonable Agents in the World?

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

*Whether the View or Approach of* DEATH *be a Subject which ſhould impart Pleaſure to the Mind of Man.*

I Have endeavour'd hitherto, to take from *Death* that frightful Air which generally accompanies it. After this, one might familiarize himſelf, and even ſport with it; its Approach being neither ſo ſhocking nor fierce as is commonly thought. I dare compare it to thoſe wild Creatures that are brought from foreign Countries: they are terrible at firſt Sight, but become ſo habitual to the Eye, by often ſeeing them, that they terrify no more. In ſpight of Man's Attachment to Life, he ſees himſelf under the happy Neceſſity of familiarizing himſelf with *Death*; and the looking on that laſt Scene as a Matter of Importance, is ſolely owing to human Weakneſs. I appeal to Monſieur *de Fontenelle*, who is known by all the World to have blam'd (*a*) *Cato* for having quitted Life too ſeriouſly. How ho-

(*a*) See his Dialogues between the Dead, vol. 1.

honourable is it for a Philoſopher, how much does it become him, to appear indifferent in his laſt Moments!

The Poets ſeem to me to have been the only, amongſt the Learned, that have ſpoke well of *Death*. The Proſpect of it has furniſh'd them with a thouſand agreeable and ſprightly Thoughts, of which the Connoiſſeurs ſee all the Beauty. The Vulgar, I confeſs, may be ſhock'd at thoſe fine Strokes of Wit; but are the Vulgar Judges of Delicacy? It requires infinite Art and Addreſs to awake the Idea of *Death*, and recall it to the Memory in wanton poetical Works, calculated to amuſe and relax. This is a very uncommon, but delicate Way of exciting Pleaſure, which none hit upon but ſuch as are of exquiſite Merit, and of the moſt refine Taſte.

*Anacreon* is inimitable in thoſe Moments wherein the Dread of an approaching *Death* obliges him to invent new Pleaſures. We may perceive him at the ſame time angry at his Fate, and inventing and finding out the Means to render himſelf happy. For to ſpeak Truth, no Conſideration can engage a Man ſo ſoon to make the moſt of what he delights in, as the

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Apprehenſion of loſing it ſoon. Herein was founded the Syſtem of the Poets of the *Auguſtan* Age; a Syſtem too refin'd and flattering to be criminal. I doubt however, whether in our Time it would recommend a Man to the Ladies, to put them in mind of *Death*. I am much miſtaken, if the Gallantry would not meet with a very cold Reception: And yet *Catullus*, who piqued him on being the Standard of Politeneſs, was of different Sentiments from ours, as may be ſeen by the following beautiful Epigram.

*Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,*
*Rumoreſque ſenum ſeveriorum*
*Omnes unius æſtimemus aſſis.*
*Soles occidere ac redire poſſunt;*
*Nobis, quùm ſemel occidit brevis lux,*
*Nox eſt perpetua una dormienda.*

In *French.*

*Songeons à jouir de la vie,*
*Puiſque l'amour, chere Lesbie,*
*Nous offre de doux paſſetems.*
*Moquons-nous des vains reglemens,*
*Qu'oppoſe la froide vieilleſſe*
*Aux ſoins d'une aimable tendreſſe.*

*Le Soleil chaque jour*
*Se cache & renait tour a tour :*
*Mais, helas ! quand la morte cruelle*
*Viendra finir notre bonheur,*
*Rien ne pourra vaincre l'horreur*
*De la nuit eternelle.*

*Dear* Leſbia, *let us live and love; and laugh at the ſevere Rules of old Age. The Light of the Sun appears and diſappears diurnally; but when once Death ſhuts it out from mortal Eyes, 'tis eternal Night.*

*Anthony Muret*, in his Comment on theſe Lines of *Catullus*, makes this judicious Reflexion: *Admonitu mortis puellam ad fruendas ſecum voluptates cohortatur; eſt autem hoc argumentum poetis perfamiliare. At the Reflexion of the Approach of Death, he invites his Miſtreſs to a mutual Enjoyment of their Pleaſures; a Topic ſo frequently urg'd, to this Purpoſe, by the Poets.*

And we may obſerve that *Horace*, in many Parts of his Works, confirms the foregoing Remark. For being the moſt ſubtile and delicate Genius of his Time, he might well conceive the Uſe that might be made of the Thoughts of *Death*, midſt the moſt luxurious Enjoyments of Life. This Thought is not ſo improper and impertinent as it would ſeem to many, ſince

the chief Beauty of one of the fineſt Hymns of Antiquity conſiſts in it. *Let me be aſſured*, ſaid *Cecilius*, *that I ſhall live ſix Months, and I ſhall ſo well have employed the Time, that I ſha'n't regret dying the ſeventh.*

Among the Moderns there are ſome who, on this Subject, have imitated the Wits of *Greece* and *Rome* in the Rectitude of their Views and Elegancy of their Taſte; but the *Italians*, above all others, ſeem to have excelled; perhaps becauſe the *Italian* Genius is better adapted than any other, to refining on Pleaſure. 'Tis the Character of that ingenious People to ſubtilize and refine; which may be perceiv'd by Part of an Elegy compos'd by *Sannazar*, a *Neapolitan* Gentleman *(a)*; *Since*, ſays he, *we are in poſſeſſion of blooming Youth, which permits the Uſe of Pleaſures, let us give a looſe to our Deſires; for Reaſon ſuits only with frightful old Age. I ſee it advance and quicken its Pace, to chaſe from us the Graces and Delights. Let us prevent ſo doleful a Diſgrace: Let the dread of an approaching Death kindle up new Deſires, and provoke Love to diſſipate a Weakneſs unworthy the Hearts of Lovers. Too happy, ſhould Death ſurprize us*

*(a) Sannazar*, lib. 1. Eleg. 3.

*us drunk with the flattering Sweetneſs of a paſſionate Tenderneſs for each other.*

In *French.*

*Puiſque nous jouiſſons d'une verte jeuneſſe,*
*Et qu'elle nous permet l'uſage des plaiſirs,*
*Vivons au gré de nos deſirs,*
*La Raiſon ne convient qu'à l'affreuſe vieilleſſe.*
*Je la vois s'avancer, elle hâte ſes pas,*
*Pour chaſſer loin de nous & les jeux & les graces.*
*Prevenons ces triſtes diſgraces:*
*Que la crainte d'un promt treſpas*
*Rechauffe nos ardeurs, & faſſe que l'amour*
*Eloigne de nos coeurs une indigne foibleſſe.*
*Trop heureux, ſi la mort nous ſurprend quelque jour,*
*Enivrez d'une douce & flateuſe tendreſſe.*

'Tis extremely wrong to ſet doleful and ill-favour'd Objects before dying Perſons. *Would it not be more eligible,* ſaid a modern refin'd (*b*) Genius, *to indulge to their Pleaſures, and inſpire them with the moſt pleaſing Ideas their Condition will permit?* Debilitated Nature wants, and ſhould be ſupported by additional Aids. *Petronius,*



(*b*) The Abbot of *St. Real,* in his Poſthumous Works.

in his Deſcription of *Encolpus* ſinking in the Waves midſt a frightful Storm, points out the pleaſing Neceſſity of indulging the Fancy in the greateſt Dangers and laſt Moments of Life. *Whilſt yet we have Life, let us rob Fate, which haſtens our Death of ſome Pleaſures.* Even the Virtuous avoid not Pleaſures that are dictated and authoriz'd by good Senſe. Why then ſhould thoſe confin'd to the Bed of Sickneſs be refus'd them? Is there any Situation in Life wherein agreeable Objects and chearful Ideas are more requiſite?

If we except thoſe who are govern'd more by Cuſtom and Prejudice than Reaſon, all Mankind will admit, that the Ideas of Death and Pleaſures agree perfectly well; of which the celebrated Feaſt of *Trimalchion* is a pregnant Inſtance. There a Silver Skeleton was ſerv'd up among Diſhes of Dainties and Rarities, in order to excite the Gueſts the more, to make the moſt of the Preſent, by putting them in mind, that the Moments for the Enjoyment of Pleaſure were but few and precious. This is one of thoſe refin'd, diſtant Turns, by which even Morality, ſometimes ſeemingly inclining

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to Libertiniſm, takes to lead Man without ſtartling his Self-Love. I ſhould think, that the Reader, by this time, is ſufficiently prepar'd to bear ſeeing the Portrait of thoſe that had ſported with Death. Happy, if I can perſwade him to follow the Example of ſo amiable Patterns!

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## CHAP III.

### *A general Idea of a merry* DEATH.

THERE is no Part of the Hiſtory of the Lives of Great Men ſo affecting, as when their Reſolution at the Approach of Death is deſcrib'd. I fancy theſe latter Moments are the only in which we don't wear an unnatural or diſingenuous Countenance. During Life, Man diſguiſes himſelf, but the Vizor falls off at the near Approach of Death, and he beholds himſelf, as it were, in his Diſhabille. How great ought his Surprize to be at that Time, when his Thoughts are wholly employ'd without being affected! Every thing contributes to expoſe him nakedly to his own View, by ſtripping

him of that pompous Out-ſide, which both flatter'd and hid him from himſelf. He finds himſelf alone, and without any flattering Ideas, becauſe he can no longer indulge his Fancy with exterior Objects. The Conſideration of this Subject not only gratifies our Curioſity, but is inſtructive. "There is nothing, ſays *Montagne*, of which I inform myſelf more "willingly, than of the Death of Men; "what they ſaid, how they look'd, and "how the Countenance was agitated. "There is no Part of Hiſtory I remark "ſo attentively. The many Examples "I bring relative to this Subject ſufficiently indicate the Bent of my Inclinations.

I am perſwaded, that the *laſt Hour* of Man's Life is that wherein he appears truly himſelf; it determines all thoſe which preceded it, as may be collected by the Philoſopher's referring the rich and happy *Cræſus* to that critical Moment. Who can judge of the Beauty of a Theatrical Performance, before he ſees the Plot unravell'd? It does not require ſo much Fortitude to expoſe one's ſelf to Death, when he is hurried, and has not Time to think of it, as when he meets it calmly

calmly in his Bed. The View of Death, in the former Inſtance, makes none, or but a ſlight Impreſſion; for, if I may be excus'd the Expreſſion, that which is call'd Valour is often but a ſpecious Maſk, which ſerves to hide a groſs and ſtupid Savageneſs.

I am not thoroughly ſatisfied with the Juſtneſs of the Ideas ariſing from Heroiſm; they reſult chiefly from human Vanity; and it is well known that Vanity ſeldom conſults good Senſe. As for me, I am not at all affected with the Image of thoſe Warriors, who had dar'd all Perils without Reflexion. I am much more pleaſingly touch'd with contemplating a Philoſopher, who calmly ſees the Approach of Death, and falls unconcern'd into its Arms. The Reſolution of the latter is full of Delicacy, but that of the firſt is vulgar, and generally brutal. A ſerious Reflexion on the Death of *Petronius* will clear up this Matter to Satisfaction. *Petronius* was the Man of his Time, and perhaps of any before or ſince, who beſt underſtood the Nature and Extent of Pleaſures or refin'd Gratification of the Senſes and Paſſions. And this Science was ever look'd upon to be an Evidence

of an exquiſite Delicacy of Taſte. I dare ſay of him, that no *Roman* ever knew ſo well as he how to gratify the Appetite of a voluptuous Court, by a conſtant Change and Novelty of pleaſing Diverſions. His Excellency that Way procur'd him the Confidence of *Nero*, who had ſubſtituted him ſovereign (*a*) Judge of Taſte and Politeneſs. No Man was ever better fitted for ſo pleaſurable an Imployment; for being free from Cares, an Enemy to Conſtraint, and preferring, as he did, a ſweet eaſy Idleneſs to an anxious active Life, none was fitter to direct the publick Shows and Diverſions, and the coſtly Repaſts at which the voluptuous Emperor took great Delight. *Tacitus* himſelf admits, that at theſe Parties of Pleaſure, tho' Debauchery was carried very high, it was nevertheleſs both ingenious and refin'd.

But the Court, deſcending to groſs Libertiniſm, became wean'd by Degrees from the Delicacy of *Petronius*'s Taſte, which being perceiv'd by him, he became tired of the Court. This appear'd a favourable Cunjuncture for thoſe who envy'd and wiſh'd to deſtroy him in *Nero*'s Opinion.

(*a*) *Arbiter Elegantiarum.* Tacit.

Opinion. They ſucceeded by ſoothing the natural Paſſions of the Prince, ever inclin'd to be gratify'd by cruel and ſavage Paſtimes. When *Petronius* ſaw the Taſte of the Emperor and Court ſo alter'd, he thought it Time to quit the World; and for that end he had his Veins open'd, being in a warm Bath, that he might die with the greater Eaſe. It is ſaid, that, in theſe latter Moments, he amus'd himſelf with compoſing Verſes, and in pleaſant Raillery, and toying with his moſt intimate Friends, as uſual, till he expir'd. I defy the worſt-natur'd Critic to point out a ſingle Circumſtance in the Death of this *Roman*, that does not ſhew a Courage truly refin'd and curiouſly ſupported. I dare then, by conſequence, name *Petronius* a Philoſopher the moſt of a Libertine, and a Libertine the moſt of a Philoſopher that ever was.

This is one of thoſe voluptuous Deaths which can't be enough admir'd. One ſees it free of that vexatious Conſtraint and Hurry ſo natural to thoſe who dread or regret loſing Life. Can a Man too aſſiduouſly or artfully contrive making the moſt of Pleaſures at a Time when every Object which preſents itſelf to the Mind

impreſſes melancholy Ideas? A Man ſhould be a *Petronius* to do this with Addreſs. He had acquir'd, by a long Experience, that uſeful Addreſs which directs to the exacting ſome Pleaſure from the moſt diſagreeable and doleful Situation.

I deſpiſe thoſe over-ſerious Deaths, whoſe chief Merit conſiſts in an Abundance of Affectation. Valour is never the more eſtimable for being premeditated. In one juſt upon the Verge of Life, a little Negligence is very becoming: I mean that ſort of Negligence which is the firſt and true Reſult of unſully'd Joy. As this Species of Indolence ariſes from a Tranquillity of Mind, is there any Degree of Voluptuouſneſs preferable to it? I ſhould be miſtaken, did I expect that what I advance would be reliſh'd by thoſe dark, dreaming, conceal'd Souls, whom nothing can pleaſe that is not exactly and ſcrupulouſly ſerious. They would be ſorry, that by any Addreſs, that Horror ſhould be leſſen'd which Death neceſſarily inſpires. And yet the moſt uſeful Science a Man can be poſſeſs'd of, is the knowing how to huſband that little Stock of ſecret Joy imparted by Nature at his Birth. Inſtead of laying it all out in his Hours of Pleaſure

Pleaſure and Recreation, he ſhould reſerve ſome Part for thoſe laſt Moments, wherein Melancholy and Anxiety preſide in the Mind, in ſpite of all his Efforts. This, perhaps, is the only Inſtance wherein Avarice would become a Virtue.

The Ancients in general look'd upon breathing their laſt in the Arms of their deareſt Friends to be dying deliciouſly. The grave and ſententious *Pindar*, having intreated the Gods to beſtow upon him the moſt charming Thing in Life, they permitted him to die, leaning his Head on the Knees of a Friend he loved tenderly.

This calls to my Mind the celebrated *Politian*, one of thoſe refin'd Wits, whom *Laurence* of *Medicis* had honour'd with his Friendſhip and Eſteem. It muſt be admitted, that his great Merit and Eruditi-on, and particularly his Knowledge of the *Belles Lettres*, and his great Pains in correcting ancient Authors, had render'd him every way worthy of the diſtinguiſh'd Honours paid him; tho' the Buſineſs of a Corrector or Compiler, in our Days, is ſo much out of Faſhion, that a Man could have no Chance of riſing to Favour, by following it ever ſo aſſiduouſly and ſucceſsfully. To his other Excel-

lencies, *Politian* added that of being an excellent Poet; and ſpite of the Violence of a burning Fever, which obliged him to take to his Bed, he compos'd a Song for a young *Greek* he had at his Houſe. After the Compoſition he roſe from his Bed, took his Lute, play'd as gracefully and melodiouſly as ever he had done, and expir'd as he had finiſh'd the ſecond Couplet of the Song.

To ſpeak conſiſtently, a ſenſible Man ſhould act, while he is in full Health, like one juſt a going to die; and then, as if he expected to live. Thus ſhould he be able to preſerve his natural Gayety in all Seaſons and Inſtances.

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## CHAP IV.

### *Of the Indifference ſhewn by many learned Men, in regard to Death.*

IN the Republic of Letters, a Man contracts a ſort of Indolence, which in one Senſe ſeems not to ariſe from a Want of Vivacity. Perhaps it may ſpring from the Learned's being more uſed than others

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to dive into Nature, and ſee Things nakedly as they are. The Habit of ſeeing Things thus ſimply and clearly, inſenſibly conveys a Knowledge, which ſoon gives a Diſtaſte for all falſe worldly Luſtre, and eaſily puts a Man out of Conceit with the World. A reaſonable Man will hear, but will never ſubject his Reaſon to the arbitrary Interpretations or Maxims of others. Vain and unſettled as Men are, do they deſerve that we ſhould too arduouſly ſeek their Eſteem, or cultivate their Friendſhip? The Philoſopher, replete with theſe Ideas, ſports with Death. He ſets out calmly and careleſly on a Journey wherein he had been preceded, and will be follow'd by ſuch Multitudes. One of our beſt Poets (*a*) has ingeniouſly expreſſed this Thought in four Lines he had plac'd over the Door of his Study.

*Las d'eſperer & de me plaindre*
*De grands, de l'amour, & du ſort,*
*J'attens patiement la mort,*
*Sans la deſirer, ni la craindre.*

*Tired of hoping and complaining of the Great, of Love, and Luck, I patiently wait Death,*

(*a*) *Maynard.*

*Death, without either wiſhing for or dreading it.*

Monſieur *Bayle*, tho' his Character of a Wit, and a difficult one to ſupport in ſo enlighten'd an Age as ours, ſeem'd to exact otherwiſe, was not unſuſceptible of this Indifference in regard to Death. So much did he deſpiſe Life, that he would not be perſwaded to take any Thing that might aſſwage the Heat of a ſlow Fever that long had prey'd upon him. However dangerous and irkſome his Diſtemper was, it prevented not his continuing a critical and moſt difficult Work he had undertaken againſt Monſieur *Le Clerc*. He ſpent greateſt Part of even the Night he died in correcting that Work; and juſt as he had finiſhed his Correction he expir'd.

I doubt whether any Paſſion can hurry a Man farther than that for the Sciences, if one may call that a Paſſion which had actuated the Great Men of all Ages.

As the Works of Monſieur *Bayle* are now public, it may not be ungrateful to conſider his Manner of writing. A Delicacy and Regularity of Stile were perhaps the only Things wanting to him. Lively and bold in his Narratives, he gave a full

Scope to his Genius ; and being exact and laborious, he too much affected making a Parade of his Learning: And thus are we to account for thoſe long and tireſome, tho' learn'd Digreſſions, which we ſo frequently meet with in his Works. But notwithſtanding theſe Defects, he has been fortunate enough to have his Manner reliſh'd by the Public, who declare loudly in his Favour.

The Lives of certain Men are chequer'd with original or uncommon Strokes. One may remark a certain Air of Superiority, in their moſt trivial Actions, which endears and affects : And it is chiefly in their laſt Moments that they ſeem to exert their Superiority of Genius moſt, in order, as it were, to the more firm Eſtabliſhment of their Honour. Monſieur *Tſchirnhaus*, one of the moſt able modern Geometricians, ſaid no more in expiring, but, *Triumph*, *Victory* ; as if he wiſh'd to have the Exquiſiteneſs of his Joy in his laſt Moment publicly known. But this kind of Joy is known only to Philoſophers.

As to the celebrated *Longolius*, he thought it obliging his beſt Friends, to give them Information of the Approach of his Death. Therefore according to

*Sainte*

*Sainte Marthe*, who relates these Particulars, he wrote of his Death to those he loved best, with as great Gayety and Indifference as if he were informing them of an agreeable Journey he intended to take. This Great Man made Eloquence his chief Study; and we have even now many of his Orations, wherein he endeavour'd to imitate the Politeness of the *Augustan* Age, which is the most fam'd Epocha for Productions of Wit and Genius.

I return to that Indifference so usual in the Republic of Letters. And what is it but a certain refin'd Sentiment of the Soul, which serves to deaden in her the Sprightliness of her Ideas of Objects, that, being free from them, she may be the more at Ease? To arrive to this Perfection, Reading is not so necessary as Meditation.

But the finest Stroke of Indifference among the Ancients, with regard to dying, is to be met in the Character of the Philosopher *Pyrrho*, the warmest Defender of Scepticism. He once maintain'd, that it was almost equal to a Man whether he died or lived. And why, said one present, don't you die? To which he answered,

ſwered, Becauſe I ſee no Difference between Life and Death. The Repartee was natural; and Beauties wholly derived from Nature, immediately ſtrike the Fancy.

To thoſe Deaths already mention'd, let us add that of a celebrated *Italian*, *Jerom Cardan*, which has an Air of Extravagance rarely ſeen. But of what Extravagance is not Man capable? Is not his Life one continu'd Scene of Folly and Buffoonery?—But as to *Cardan*; he is ſo well known by his Misfortunes and Extravagancies, that I ſhall forbear entering into the Detail of his perſonal Qualifications. And as for his Writings, they contain ſome Thoughts that ſhew him to be an Original in his way, and others that ſuit only with a Viſionary. Among many other Signs of his Whimſicalneſs, he had a ſtrong Paſſion for what we call the Occult Sciences; and having drawn his own Horoſcope, found that he ſhould die on a certain Day. He had the Weakneſs to divulge his Knowledge of his own Deſtiny; and that he might ſupport his own Character, and that of his Art, after his Death, he refrain'd from all Suſtenance, and timed it ſo judiciouſly, that he died

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on the very Day he had predicted. Should the Sect of Aſtrologers ever publiſh the Hiſtory of the moſt zealous Defenders of their Art, *Cardan* ſurely merits the firſt Place, which 'tis probable no Man will envy him.

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## CHAP. V.

### *Remarks on the Death of* Democritus, *and that of* Pomponius Atticus.

THE Publick imagines, that the Lives of Philoſophers ſhould be full of rare and extraordinary Events. Infinite Pains are taken to find ſomething of the Marvellous in all their Actions: Even Fable ſerves to amuſe theſe curious Reſearchers, where Truth is wanting. This Itch ariſes from refining on Self-Love, which is thus pleas'd to be able to account for the Ignorance that leads to this erroneous Curioſity. Many of thoſe Writers that have attempted to write the Hiſtory of Philoſophers, and particularly *Diogenes Laertius*, have interlarded their Works with much Falſhood and Romance. But I don't at all wonder at it, it being pretty diffi-

difficult for an Author to keep up ſtrictly to Truth, when he is ſure to pleaſe by ſtifling it.

I ſhall avoid mentioning the Fables recounted concerning *Democritus*, as carrying me too far out of my Way. Beſides, I ſhould be ſorry to be oblig'd to employ my Time unprofitably, which muſt inevitably be the Caſe, whenever a Man takes upon him to juſtify another, eſpecially in Trifles. I ſhall be better reliſh'd by giving a juſt Idea of the Character of that Philoſopher, as being a Subject far more intereſting. *Democritus* was a Man of a ſolitary, gloomy, reſerv'd Diſpoſition, affecting nothing ſo much as Meditation, which render'd him every way qualified for unfolding the Secrets of Nature. His Cuſtom of turning every thing into Ridicule, does him much Honour. For what can be a more agreeable Subject of Raillery to a Philoſopher, than the Mirrour of the World? Can one refrain laughing at Men, when he conſiders them attentively? Their whole Lives are ſpent in going to and fro, and in neglecting Things of Uſe and Neceſſity for the Uſeleſs and Unneceſſary.

But

But to return to *Democritus*; when he perceiv'd himſelf no longer able to bear up againſt the Preſſure of a very advanc'd Age, he reſolv'd to quit the World. This Reſolution alarm'd his Siſter, who intreated he would poſtpone his Death, at leaſt till after the three approaching Feſtivals of *Ceres*. To oblige her he ſeemingly conſented, order'd a Pot of Honey to be ſet by him, and lived ſome few Days longer; after which, this wiſe old Man willingly reſign'd himſelf to Death. I don't think there are any ſolid Grounds for the Accuſation brought againſt him by ſome, of being an Admirer of the Art of Magick. What *Lucian* ſays of the ſuperior Strength of his Judgment ſeems to deſtroy what has been urg'd againſt him on this Head, by more credulous Authors. 'Tis probable, the Age which *Democritus* liv'd in was not unlike ours, wherein Writers of a narrow Genius take the Liberty of attacking ſuch as are above vulgar Prejudices.

*Pomponius Atticus*, whom we are to treat of next, was the intimate Friend of *Cicero*, which, in my Opinion, adds not a little to his Character. Poliſh'd and agreeable in his Parties of Pleaſure, and delicate in his

his Taſte, he ſought that ſmooth, pleaſing Voluptuouſneſs, which becomes the Senſible and Virtuous. As he was of a retir'd and ſtudious Nature, he never would intermeddle in publick Affairs. And tho' he embrac'd neither Party during the Civil Wars, he was equally eſteem'd by *Cæſar* and *Pompey*; an Inſtance that Merit is eſtimable even in an Enemy.

*Atticus* was naturally of a healthy Conſtitution; but finding it impair'd by Age, and being taken ill, he called all his Family about him, to whom he imparted, in few Words, the Reſolution he had taken of quitting Life. The Thing ſeem'd deſperate, but it was perceiv'd by the Pleaſantneſs of his Countenance, that he was determin'd. In reality, he refus'd all Nouriſhment; and it is ſaid that his Gayety increas'd as Death advanc'd.

A Man muſt certainly feel ſomewhat in himſelf, which is ſuperior to Life, when he can diſpoſe of it with ſo much Eaſe and Liberality. And tho' Men of this reſolute Caſt are rare, yet every Age furniſhes ſome, it being as it were neceſſary that ſuch Men ſhould appear from time to time, in order to put Man in mind of his Weakneſs.

Spite

Spite of the Criticiſm of ſome late Writers, I thought myſelf oblig'd to produce *Atticus* as a Man of Virtue; yet perhaps was he virtuous only from Conſtitution. But theſe ſort of Virtues which require no Efforts, but are natural, are infinitely agreeable in the Commerce of the World. Who knows if all Virtues don't flow from this Spring? But if there be any produced by another Cauſe, they are very uncommon, and without doubt the moſt eſtimable.

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## CHAP. VI.

### *Of the Time when Man ſhould chuſe to die.*

SUCH is the Deſtiny of Man, that no Happineſs is permanent in this Life. The Flight of Fortune is ſo rapid, that ſhe ſcarce gives one Time to diſtinguiſh her Smiles. It would ſeem that it is her Inconſtancy which prevents her fixing ſo as to render Happineſs more ſolid, or perhaps ſhe has too many to ſatiate; and ſhould ſhe attempt to do it generally, her Stock might fail. This, at leaſt, is not the leaſt probable of her Excuſes.

cuſes. But he who would dare attempt proving that ſhe acts a double Part, would do the Public no inconſiderable Service.

To ſpeak more ſeriouſly; Proſperity, when attended with too great Eclat, is never permanent; and often indicates an approaching Reverſe of Fortune. The Truth of this Aſſertion is confim'd by Experience, which ſometimes puts even Reaſon out of Countenance, and often corrects it. 'Tis to avoid theſe certain Reverſes of Fortune, that Death is ſometimes deſirable. How often have Men been known to lament having liv'd too long by a Day? *(a) I have liv'd longer by a Day than was neceſſary*, ſaid *Laberius*, in one of his Paſquinades. This Reflexion, tho' coming from a Comedian, has been often repeated by the wiſeſt and greateſt Men. How often has the brighteſt Reputation been tarniſh'd in the ſhort Space of a ſingle Day? How many Stateſmen and Commanders of Armies would have ſhone in the Annals of Great Men, had they died, the firſt after having brought ſome important Negotiation to Perfection, and the latter after gaining ſome ſignal Victory?

*(a) Nimirum hac una die plus vixi, mihi quam vivendum eſt.*

tory? One unſucceſsful Incident often ſullies a whole Life of Glory, in the Opinion of ungrateful, forgetting Man.

How often has Love caus'd its Votaries to wiſh for Death, after receiving diſtinguiſh'd Favours from their Miſtreſſes? The Poets account for this Weakneſs more naturally than any, they being leſs diſcreet on theſe Occaſions than others. Here follows an Imitation of the fine Lines of *Petronius* on this Subject, beginning with *Qualis nox fuit illa*, &c.

In *French.*

*Ah, que cette nuit fut charmante!*
*Quels baiſirs! quels embraſſemens!*
*Une chaleur vive & touchante*
*Nous ſaiſit en ces doux moments.*
*Nos ames de plaiſirs mollement alterées*
*Sur nos levres, helas, jouiſſoient d'un bonheur,*
*Dont elles ſembloient enivrees.*
*Chagrins mortels, cuiſans deſirs,*
*Pourriez-vous me porter envie?*
*Apres avoir gouté de ſi tendres plaiſirs,*
*On ne doit plus aimer la vie.*

*Oh, how charming was that Night! How many and amorous were our Hugs and Kiſſes,*

*in*

*in thoſe ſoft Moments, when impell'd by an immenſe affecting Warmth, our Souls, thirſty with Rapture, enjoy'd a Bliſs on our Lips, which ſeem'd to intoxicate them! You mortal Sorrows and ſmarting Deſires, can you envy my Happineſs? After taſting ſuch affecting Pleaſures, Life ſhould be our Care no more.*

The Advice of a certain *Lacedemonian* to *Diagoras* was much to the ſame Purport. That happy old Man, being almoſt ſtifled to Death by the Multitude of his Fellow-Citizens, who preſs'd to do him Honours, ſtrew him with Flowers, and congratulate him on the Victories obtain'd by his three Sons, on one Day, at the *Olympic* Games, a Man went up and told him calmly, *Diagoras, die, for thou art too happy.* And he died at the ſame time in earneſt, with Exceſs of Joy, in the Arms of his Children.

If it be true, according to the Syſtem of the Ancients, that Life is only a Loan lent Man by the Gods, what greater Mark of their Friendſhip could they give, than recalling it in a favourable Seaſon? How great Sorrow would they ſave him, did they always act ſo friendly a

a Part (a)! *Cicero*, in a Panegyrick on one of his Friends, thought himſelf obliged to recount, amongſt his other Proſperities, the having died before the Civil Wars. The Panegyriſt ſpeaks here like a true Patriot; and it muſt be own'd, that no People had ever carried the Virtue of Patriotiſm ſo high as the *Romans*.

Here might I give a Hiſtory of Perſons who died of Exceſs of Joy; but this would carry me from my Deſign: For as I intend the Inſtruction of the Reader, a ſimple Collection of hiſtorical Facts, might amuſe, but not inſtruct him. His Attention ſhould be engag'd by choſen Subjects, whence the neceſſary Reflexions might ariſe naturally. Thus would the Mind be awaken'd and quicken'd, by attributing to itſelf the Honour of an Acquiſition, which is uſeful without coſting any Pains to come by it. But as there are of all ſorts who are troubled with the Itch of Curioſity, I refer thoſe who would wiſh to be inform'd exactly of ſuch of the Ancients as died of Exceſs of Joy, to the Works

(a) *Si rempublicam caſus ſecuti ſunt ut mihi non erepta à Diis immortalibus L. Craſſo vita, ſed donata mors eſſe videatur.*

Works of *Valerius Maximus*, and the elder *Pliny*.

As to the Moderns, I ſhall but juſt touch upon the Character of Pope *Leo* X. who is known to have had much of that Fire which ingenders ſtrong Paſſions that are often miſtaken for Virtue,. *Leo* being at one of his Country-Houſes, not far from *Rome*, had News brought him, that the *French* were beaten from *Pavia* and *Milan*; which ſo overwhelm'd him with Joy, that he died a few Minutes after. A very odd kind of Death for a Pope.

Prudence ſeldom fails dictating to a Man, when he ſhould lay down a Poſt or Employment. On theſe Occaſions there are critical Moments, which, if embrac'd, a Man retires from the Stage with the Applauſe of the World; but if elapſed, that ſame World begins ſoon to be tired of him. It is the Buſineſs, and even the Intereſt of a wiſe Man to know the moſt proper Time for retiring; but this Science is not eaſily acquir'd; it being neceſſary, in order to reſiſt Self-Love, to have an almoſt continual Attention to one's own Thoughts, Words and Actions. Who, without this neceſſary Watch over himſelf, could ſubſcribe to this judicious Maxim of the

Poets? *viz. To be wiſe enough to know when to quit the Liſt, and retire.*

(a) *Solve ſeneſcentem maturè ſanus equum, ne*
*Peccet ad extremum ridendus, & ilia ducat.*

I might apply indifferently to all Men what *Horace* applies alone to Poets who would grow hoary on *Parnaſſus*. But how happy would it be, if we were to be ridiculous but at a certain Age!

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## CHAP. VII.

### *A Thought of* Valerius Maximus's *examin'd.*

I Am pleas'd that I have here an Opportunity of ſpeaking in praiſe of *Anacreon*, who, in my Opinion, was the ſofteſt, moſt moving Poet of Antiquity; and him who ſeem'd to underſtand beſt the Tendency and End of Gallantrics. His Poetry has very much of that Agreeableneſs which pleaſes the Connoiſſeurs; and his Manner of making Love has more the Air of the preſent Age than that

(a) *Hor. Epiſt.* 1. *lib.* 1.

that wherein he liv'd; which is an Indication of the Delicacy of his Genius. The Ancients were abſolute Strangers to true Politeneſs. And notwithſtanding the Public Prejudice in their Favour, I venture ſaying, that they were as groſs and uncouth at their moſt diſtinguiſh'd Evening Aſſemblies, as the Moderns are elegant and polite at ours. It requir'd many Ages to refine and perfection the Art of Loving.

I ſhall be pardon'd for intereſting myſelf ſo greatly in what regards to *Anacreon*, being of the Number of thoſe Great Men that are born ſolely to pleaſe. *Valerius Maximus* has prais'd him highly and delicately, in ſaying, *That Nature had been too liberal in endowing him with the Vein of Poetry, and bleſſing him with an eaſy Death.* He joins theſe Bleſſings, but in my Opinion, the latter is preferable and more deſirable. Poets, ſometimes, repent them for having been favour'd with the Poetic Vein; but no Man is diſpleas'd for not being at Leiſure to regret the Loſs of Life. On the whole, I reliſh greatly the Thought of *Valerius Maximus*.

Let it not be ſuppos'd, that *Anacreon* made a Trade of Poetry: On the contrary, he employ'd ſuch Moments only at his Compoſitions, as he could ſpare from his Pleaſures. And no Man living was more ſenſible of the Sweets of Love, or more warmly inclin'd to indulge his Palate. One may perceive a certain Air of Indolence run thro' all his Compoſitions, which took extremely with all the *Greeks* of Taſte: And that happy Negligence was ſo natural and peculiar to him, that he had been repreſented by many, as being always half drunk, and preparing to play on his Flute.

No Man can be inſenſible of the Pleaſure of expiring ſmoothly and eaſily. A tranquil *Death* is, in ſome meaſure, the Image of *Life*. It renders the critical Point, which ſevers them, imperceptible.

And if any Difference appears, 'tis occaſion'd only by the Variety of Objects, which occur at that Moment; gloomy Objects, which create melancholy Reflexions. For as to Death itſelf, it has nothing of mournful; being much ſuch a Moment which juſt ſeparates Sleep from Waking. And is it neceſſary that a Man

ſhould

ſhould uſe much Precaution in lying down to ſleep?

In premiſing, that Death was the Image of Life, methinks it ſhould not be imputed to me as a Crime, ſince I meant only that quiet, tranquil Life, exempt from Cares and Troubles; ſuch as the ingenious *Marot* wiſh'd for in the following Epigram.

In *French.*

*S'on nous laiſſoit nos jours en paix uſer,*
*Du tems preſent à loiſir diſpoſer,*
*Et librement vivre comme il faut vivre;*
*Palais & Cours ne nous faudroit plus ſuivre,*
*Plaids, ne procès, ne les riches maiſons*
*Avec leur gloire & enfumez blaſons:*
*Mais ſous belle ombre, en chambre & galeries*
*Nous pourmenans, livres & railleries,*
*Dames & bains, ſeroient les paſſetems,*
*Lieux & labeurs de nos eſprits contens.*
*Las, maintenant à nous point ne vivons,*
*Et le bon tems perir pour nous ſçavons,*
*Et s'envoler, ſans remedes quelconques,*
*Puiſqu'on le ſçait, que ne vit-on bien doncques.*

*Would we paſs our Days in Peace, diſpoſe of the preſent Time as we ſhould pleaſe,*

*and live with Freedom as men ſhould live; we ought to ſhun Courts and Palaces, Litigations and Law-Suits, and Habitations richly and gorgeouſly furniſh'd. But in ſome beautiful Shade, and walking in ſome ſpacious Gallery, we ſhould ſpend our Moments; and with Books and Raillery, and Women and Baths, we ſhould recreate ourſelves to refreſh and invigorate the Mind. For ſhould that be wearied, it would be ceaſing to live, as precious Time would be loſt to us. There is no preventing the Flight of Time; but ſince we know it, why don't we make better Uſe of it?*

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## CHAP. VIII.

### *Remarks on the Character of the Emperor* Veſpaſian.

WHEN Man is left to himſelf, there is ſcarce any Exceſs of Flattery he does not commit. Not contented to diſguiſe Crimes expos'd to public View, he frquently decks out Vice with the Exteriors of Virtue. And it is to this baſe Flattery, that many Great Princes owe

owe Part of their Glory; for Truth is not very laviſh of its Praiſes. Hence it is, that the reading of Hiſtory often becomes dangerous, or at leaſt diſſatisfactory to the Ingenuous and Sincere.

I know of no Nation that carried Flattery higher than the *Romans*. Being ſervilely attach'd to their Governors, they approv'd even their Impetuoſities and Extravagancies. The moſt criminal Actions became Objects of the public Admiration. How lamentable is the Lot of Kings, who can never be ſure that they are virtuous! They have been rank'd among the Gods, when even they themſelves believ'd they were unworthy of the Eſteem of Man. Never was Ridicule puſh'd ſo far; nor could the *Romans* have been guilty of more egregious Folly.

*Veſpaſian* knew the immoderate Extent of this Extravagance, and would have made the dull, inſipid Flatterers of his Court ſenſible of it, by ſaying, to inform them that he was dangerouſly ill, *I perceive that I ſhall ſoon become a God.* But the Flatterer is inſenſible of the Delicacy of ſuch a Reproach, perſwading himſelf that Man can't be an Admirer of Truth.

That Emperor, with very moderate Talents, was however a great Prince: And no Man knew better how to ſet off ordinary Virtues for great and pompous. Directed by gentle and tranquil Manners, he look'd not on a Throne as a Theatre, where one ought to diſplay exceſſive Paſſions. He applied himſelf ſolely to the Re-eſtabliſhment of Juſtice, the Suppreſſion of the Licentiouſneſs of the Soldiery, and to the Improvement of Arts and Sciences. Glorious Application in a Prince! Hence it appears, that a Sublimity of Genius is not ſo uſeful as a bleſſed Mediocrity to Kings who would willingly rule according to the Precepts of true Wiſdom.

## CHAP. IX.

*The Buffooneries of the Emperor* Auguſtus *at the Time of his Death; thoſe of* Rabelais, &c.

IT is neceſſary ſome times, that the Public ſhould know, that thoſe who are call'd Great Men, differ from others only

only by knowing better how to diſguiſe their Vices, or by adopting certain pompous Imperfections. Art and Addreſs ſtand them inſtead of Merit. And I am perſwaded that many Actions, which have been admir'd for Ages, would appear deſpiſeable to us, could we be made acquainted with the true Motives of them. The World is a Bubble eaſily impos'd upon, which every one has in his Power to deceive, and yet there are ſome Meaſures to be kept with it; and thoſe who moſt aſſiduouſly obſerve theſe, ſucceed beſt, and are deem'd to be Great Men; whereas all others are either diſregarded or forgotten. How fantaſtical!

*Auguſtus* was one who diſſembled and conceal'd his Vices beſt of any Man either before or ſince his Time. Thoroughly vers'd in that refin'd Policy which *Machiavel* has ſince reduced to Rules, he conceal'd his Ambition under the moſt ſpecious Appearances: And ſeemingly inclin'd to a ſtrict Obſervance of the Conditions of the Triumvirate, tho' his ſole View was to make himſelf abſolute Maſter of the Empire. No Man was ever better ſkill'd in the great Myſtery of turning all Incidents to one's own Advantage,

than that Emperor: And without doubt, ſuch a Genius as his was, is the beſt adapted to a Throne.

Unlike ſuch Princes as would inſpire a Dread of their Power, *Auguſtus* ſought to be beloved; and the better to gain, or rather to extort the Affection of the Public, he affected to abdicate the Imperial Crown. His Moderation, tho' diſſembled, contributed more to ingratiate him to the Public, than a thouſand Panegyricks. Being naturally addicted to Pleaſures, he lov'd Peace, and encouraged Arts and Sciences. As his Court was poliſh'd and agreeable, 'tis no wonder it became the Rendezvous of the Wits of his Age. *Virgil* and *Horace*, and other diſtinguiſh'd Genius's of thoſe Times, had no Title nor Introduction but their ſuperior Talents to his Court or Confidence. Such were the refin'd Companions of the Emperor's Leiſure-hours; for being voluptuous by Nature, and habituated to Pleaſures, he could diſtinguiſh and refine upon them better than others.

We are aſſured by *Suetonius*, that the Approach of Death in his laſt Illneſs had not diminiſh'd that Emperor's natural Gayety of Temper. His Indiſpoſition in-

increaſing, he call'd for a Looking-glaſs, and had his Hair comb'd and dreſs'd, as if he deſign'd to appear in Public; and then, turning to thoſe who were in his Bed-Chamber, he aſk'd them ſmilingly, *Do you take me for a good Comedian?* This particular Gayety of Temper on ſo particular Occaſion, was improv'd by the Company, and particularly by *Auguſtus* himſelf, by the Repetition of two *Greek* Verſes, importing, *that on ſo auſpicious a Day all ſhould give a Looſe to Joy; for his part, he thank'd the Gods for the Approach of Death.*

In *French.*

*Que chacun aujourd'hui s'abandonne à la joye.*
*Je rends graces au deſtin de la mort qu'il m'envoye.*

This comes up to that excellent Saying of *Petronius, Mundus univerſus exercet hiſtoriam; all Men are Comedians*—who play different Parts, and are either hiſs'd or clap'd as Whim and Caprice direct. I ſay Caprice, becauſe Reaſon is intirely out of the Queſtion.

*Ra-*

*Rabelais*, in his laſt Moments, expreſs'd himſelf not very unlike *Auguſtus*: But that ought not to ſurprize; for *Rabelais* was a Buffoon by Profeſſion. He was an Original in that ſort of Writing, of which the Beauty conſiſts in a whimſical Mixture of the Serious and the Comical. Perhaps he may have had too much Honour done him in later Times, by thoſe who imagine to have found ſome Myſtery in all his Writings. However it be, a Commentary on that Author would adminiſter Pleaſure, provided it was by an able Pen. It has been reported that *Guy Patin* had undertaken ſuch a Work; it were to be wiſh'd he had continued it, no Man being more capable of it than he.

Cardinal *du Bellai* is univerſally extoll'd for having favour'd *Rabelais*, and protected him in a particular Manner. As ſoon as that diſtinguiſh'd Prelate heard of his Favourite's Illneſs, he ſent one of his Pages to enquire after his Health; a Practice ſeldom uſed by Superiors, or ſuch as think themſelves ſo. *Rabelais* fool'd and diverted himſelf with the Page a long while; but the Pangs of Death redoubling upon him, he cried out to the Boy, *Tell your Lord the Condition you ſee me*

*me in; I am going in ſearch of a great May-be; 'tis in the Mag-pye's Neſt, where it may remain; and as for you, you will be always a Fool—— Draw the Curtain, the Farce is ended.* This Rant is worthy of one who excell'd in the Art of Buffoonery; and I doubt whether our more learned Age could afford *Rabelais* any new Leſſons on the Subject.

After delineating ſo minutely the Deaths of the two foregoing, 'tis but juſt that I mention that of *Malherbe*, one of the firſt and chiefeſt Poliſhers of the *French* Taſte. *Boileau* clearly ſhews how greatly our Poetry is oblig'd to that Great Man. Before his Time it was rude, inaccurate and irregular; but his Precepts and Example ſoon brought it to Harmony, Method, and Order. *Malherbe* had a happy Genius, capable of ſtriking out new Paths. His Thoughts were elevated, and he dreſs'd them up agreeably and movingly; in a Word, he was born with ſuch a Diſpoſition as *Horace* requires in a Poet.

*Cui mens divinior, atque os*
*Magna ſonaturum, des nominis hujus honorem.*

*Ra-*

*Racan*, who was not only a diſtinguiſh'd Genius, but a Man of Quality, wrote the Life of *Malherbe*, and with an Air of great Sincerity. He informs us that the Poet was much of a Philoſopher, eſpecially after the Death of his Son, and that he had given Indications of his Stoiciſm in his laſt Illneſs, a Time when, in my Opinion, ſuch Indications ought not to be ſuſpected. *Racan* tells us, that about an Hour before his Death, *he ſtarted out of his Sleep to reprehend his Landlady, who nurs'd him in his Illneſs, for a Word ſhe had ſpoken which he conceived not to be good* French; *and his Confeſſor having reprehended him in his Turn, for employing his laſt precious Moments no better, he reply'd, that he could not help defending the Purity of the* French *Language to the laſt Moment of his Life.* This, I confeſs, was puſhing the Delicacy of the Ear to an uncommon Nicety, of which there is no Example among our modern critical *Puriſts*. The Authors whom I intend by this Deſcription are eaſily diſtinguiſh'd.

Tho' *Malherbe* had given himſelf up almoſt wholly to Poetry, yet may it be perceiv'd that he held it not in great Eſteem. For a Friend complaining to

him

him one Day, that none were recompenſed but the Military Gentlemen, or thoſe employ'd in the Revenue, he reply'd, that he was not at all ſurpriz'd at it, being of Opinion, *that a Poet was juſt as uſeful a Member of a Commonwealth, as a good Player of Skettles.* I would not be thought to approve intirely of this Compariſon, tho' I can't but ſay that I think it very odd there ſhould be a particular Art in the World for propagating Fable and Untruth.

## CHAP. X.

### *The Tranſlation of a Paſſage from* Sueto-nius.

THE illuſtrious *(a)* Imitator of *Theophraſtus* has propoſed, in his new Characters, a curious Problem, which has not been reſolv'd hitherto: *He would be truly inform'd what ſort of Genius was fitteſt to raiſe a Fortune.* Every Day's Experience renders this Queſtion more complicated and difficult; for never were ſo many worthleſs Men rais'd to high

*(a) Labruyere.*

high Posts and Dignities as at present. No Indication of modern Judgment, tho' it be certainly one of modern Whimsicalness. However it be, 'tis certain that all Countries furnish pompous Examples, wherein Chance alone seems to have govern'd; which might as well incite Fools to sue to Fortune, as the Wise to contemn her.

In the *Roman* Empire there have been many Instances where such worthless Darlings of *Capricious* Fortune had been exalted even to the Throne: Of these was *Salvius Otho*, one of the first twelve *Cæsars*. The scandalous Alliance of his Great Grandfather, and his Grandmother's Sensibility of *Tiberius Cæsar*'s Passion for her, were the Sources of his Elevation. A base, unworthy Incident contributes as much as one founded in Virtue to raise and set Men up in a conspicuous Point of Light. How many are the eminent Establishments which originally sprung from the most heinous Crimes?

The Emperor *Otho* was endow'd with none of those eminent Qualifications which Sovereignty seems to require. Being timid from Nature, he never would take the Field to combat his Rival *Vitellius* per-

perſonally. His Cowardice was the Cauſe of his Ruin; and his Dread of falling into the Hands of a cruel Enemy determin'd him to be his own Executioner. The Fact is thus related by *Suetonius*.

*Otho*, diſbelieving a common Soldier who had brought him the firſt News of the entire Defeat of his Army againſt *Vitellius*, charg'd the Meſſenger with Untruth or Cowardice, which ſo incens'd the latter, that he drew his Sword and ſtabb'd himſelf. The Self-Murder ſo terrified the Emperor, that he ſwore he never more would be the Cauſe of any Man's Death: And then turning to his principal Courtiers, he intreated they would give him good Advice. After the uſual Aſſurances, in like Caſes, of Reliance on his Side, and Friendſhip on theirs, *Otho* retir'd to his Cloſet to write to his Siſter; after which, thinking himſelf oblig'd, he burnt certain ſecret Papers he had, and diſtributed all his Money among the faithfulleſt of his Servants.

After ſuch preparatory Diſpoſitions as theſe, the Emperor hearing an Outcry in the Street, and underſtanding it had been occaſion'd by the Impriſonment of ſuch as attempted to quit the City, he order'd

that

that general Liberty ſhould be allow'd; and then ſaid jocoſely, *Let us for another Night lend ourſelves to Life.* After this the Public were permitted to come to the Palace and ſee the Prince, who in their Preſence drank a Glaſs of Water, and chuſing the ſharpeſt of two Daggers, which he call'd for, he laid it under the Bolſter of his Bed. Then he laid him down with great Compoſure of Mind, order'd the Door of his Chamber to be ſet open, and ſlept ſoundly. After he wak'd, his firſt Care was to look for his Dagger, with which he ſtabb'd himſelf.

Thus died *Otho*, who, excepting the laſt Day of his Life, was always weak and inconſtant. 'Tis whimſical enough to ſee that that Prince became a Great Man at a Time that others ceaſe to be ſo.

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## CHAP. XI.

### *Of Women who have died facetiouſly.*

I Don't think Reſolution to be the favorite Virtue of the Fair Sex. Their Senſibility of the ſofter Paſſions ſeems to ſtifle

ſtifle in them all ſuch Thoughts as are adapted to Heroiſm. And I am not ſurpriz'd at it; for the Mind, which reſts upon Pleaſures for its Contentment, ſeldom riſes to the Sublime. Women, being naturally compaſſionate, and Coquettes from Reaſon, their Thoughts are wholly bent upon excelling in the Art of pleaſing. Far from endeavouring to impoſe on the World by an Affectation of Courage, they ſeem to glory in the Want of it. Nor ought they to be blam'd, ſince no Triumph equals theirs.

But tho' Courage be no uſeful Virtue to the Fair, there have been however Heroines, Philoſophers, and even ſome of ſound Underſtandings found amongſt them. All depends on the firſt Impreſſions, which generally ſink deepeſt in the moſt ſprightly Imaginations. Hiſtory either ancient or modern, affords us but very few Inſtances of Women that have jeſted with Death: And of theſe one of the moſt remarkable is Mademoiſelle *de Limeuil*, Maid of Honour to Queen *Catharine* of *Medicis*. Young as ſhe was, ſhe made herſelf ſufficiently known at Court by the Happineſs of her Expreſſion and Triteneſs of her Paſquins, and other the

the like Compoſitions. An old Author ſays freely of her, *That ſhe was a Tongue-Pad, but ſpoke well, and to the Purpoſe.* Is there any Place in the World where a ſatirical Temper can ſo well diſplay itſelf as at Court? Where can a Satiriſt exerciſe his Talents, or indulge himſelf ſo well as in a Place occupied, for the moſt part, by Fools of Quality, who prefer the Tinſel of *Taſſo* to *Virgil*'s Gold?

As for Mademoiſelle *de Limeuil*, I can't better recount what I intended to ſay of her than in *Brantome*'s Words. "When "ſays he, the Moment of her Death "drew nigh, ſhe call'd for her Man-"Servant, named *Julien*, who play'd well "on the Fiddle. *Julien*, ſaid ſhe, take "your Fiddle, and play conſtantly, till "you ſee I am dead, *the Defeat of the* "*Swiſs*. Play the beſt you can; and "when you come to thoſe Words, *all is* "*loſt*, repeat that Part of the Tune four "or five Times as mournfully as you "poſſibly can. The Valet obey'd, and "ſhe accompany'd him with her Voice, "till ſhe came to thoſe Words, *all is loſt*, "which after repeating twice, ſhe turn'd "herſelf to thoſe about her, *all is loſt at*

*this*

*this Puſh, and in good earneſt*;" and thus ſhe died.

Mademoiſelle *de Limeuil* had a Siſter that was perfectly handſome, but not at all diſtinguiſh'd for Wit. Such is the Fate of moſt Excellencies, which ſeldom center in one and the ſame Object. But on this one Account, has Man any Right to complain?

One need no very great Intimacy with the Fair, to know that Women would chooſe being very handſome and ſilly, rather than very witty and plain. This Preference in favour of Beauty is common to the whole Sex. Queen *Elizabeth* of *England*, tho' otherwiſe a Woman of uncommon Parts, was not exempt from this Weakneſs. Notwithſtanding the elevated Splendour of a Throne, ſhe could make a conſiderable Preſent to a young *Dutchman* that had prais'd her Perſon. But let it be remark'd by the Way, that Self-Love is inſeparable from human Nature; and I am not clear, but it is Man's predominant Paſſion, or rather his moſt eſſential Character. If one could be found exempt from it, he might be a fit Inhabitant for *Plato*'s Imaginary Republic, but for no other.

Far

Far from endeavouring to depreciate the Memory of Queen *Elizabeth*; I own with Pleaſure, that ſhe was born what other Princeſſes become by arduous Study. Jealous of her Power, and vers'd in the Art of inſpiring a Dread of that Power, ſhe ſhew'd no leſs Reſolution while ſhe liv'd, than ſhe did Indifference at the Approach of Death. Here follows what *Vittorio Siri*, a noted *Italian*, ſays of her in his ſecret Memoirs: " That Queen, ſitting on " her Bed, with a Finger on her Mouth, " and her Eyes fix'd on the Floor, or- " der'd her ordinary Muſic into her Room, " to which ſhe liſten'd with great Atten- " tion, and much ſeeming Satisfaction till " ſhe expir'd.

A Woman ought not to be reproach'd for procuring to herſelf, in her laſt Moments, all the Pleaſures ſhe can think of; it being the Means of diſſipating ſuch melancholy Reflexions as neceſſarily obtrude on the Mind at ſuch Times. An agreeable Invention is often the ſureſt Cure for Inquietude.

To the Death of *Elizabeth*, let me be allow'd to join that of her Mother, *Ann Boleyn*. This Princeſs, no leſs famous for her Diſgrace than Elevation, diſcarded from

from the Throne but to aſcend the Scaffold. A momentary Grandeur was all ſhe had to atone for an inglorious Death. 'Tis ſometimes an Unhappineſs to be a Favourite of Fortune, which often ſports itſelf with the Miſeries of its Votaries.

*Ann Boleyn* was ſubject to great Inequalities of Mind. During her Impriſonment: ſhe wept and ſung alternately; and in one inſtant was ſeen to make a Tranſition from Joy to Grief. Being on the Scaffold, ſhe aſk'd the Executioner if he was expert at his Buſineſs, and preſently burſt into a Fit of Laughter. I don't deny but there may be a Mixture of Whim and Extravagance in the latter Conduct of that Princeſs; but don't we know that the greateſt Men have their Weakneſſes? Or as an ancient Writer expreſſes it, *Nullum magnum ingenium ſine mixtura dementiæ.*

## CHAP. XII.

### *Of the Dutcheſs of* Mazarin's *laſt Moments.*

THAT Lady's Adventures have made ſo much Noiſe in the World, and her Hiſtory is ſo well known, that it

would ill become me to enter into a Detail of her Life. She was brought to *France* from *Italy* before ſhe was quite ſix Years old; and in marrying the Duke *de la Meilleraye* ſhe inherited the immenſe Fortune of her Uncle, Cardinal *Mazarin*. The ſcrupulous and ſevere Temper of her Conſort obliged her, after many caſual Separations, to leave the Kingdom, chuſing *England*, where ſhe was generally eſteem'd, for the Place of her Reſidence. Saint *Evremond*, who was ſo good a Judge of Merit, was attach'd to her in a very particular Manner, and took all Opportunities of extolling her. And tho' ſhe be not the Author of the Memoirs which paſs for hers, there is no refuſing her the Quality of a fine Genius, without doing her an Injuſtice.

At the Hour of her Death ſhe gave the ſtrongeſt Indications that could poſſibly be, of the moſt deep rooted Indevotion. I muſt neceſſarily be underſtood when I ſay, that ſhe expir'd as unconcernedly as if the World had been to end with her. In a Word, a late curious Writer informs us, that ſhe continued to her laſt Moment the ſame Sentiments imputed to her by Saint *Evremond* in one of

his

his Letters, wherein, to diſſwade her from a Deſign ſhe had of retiring to a Cloyſter, he ſpeaks to her as follows. " If you had been touch'd by the ſpecial " Grace of God, which would have " attach'd you to his Service, one might " over-look the Severity of your Condi- " tion, becauſe the Ardour of Piety " would help to make all Things eaſy to " you. But you are neither convinc'd " nor affected; and you are as yet to " learn the Belief of him for whom you " would undergo ſo great Hardſhips." In ſuch a State of Incredulity as the Dutcheſs was, one eaſily ſurmounts thoſe Formalities which the Superſtitious uſe in their laſt Moments.

But midſt all her Indolence, ſhe own'd ſhe was ſorry to die before Saint *Evremond.* " I would fain ſee, *ſaid ſhe agree-* " *ably*, if he perſevered to the laſt in that " Indifference for Life, and in that un- " prejudiced Freedom of Thought and " Speech, on which he values himſelf ſo " much". The Conſequence bely'd not the favourable Opinions held of Men of Wit and ſound Judgment. For Saint *Evremond* betray'd no Weakneſs of Mind in his laſt Moments; he ſhew'd no Con-

cern for quitting the World, tho', for above forty Years, his chief Study was how to indulge and gratify his Paſſions. He plung'd into Eternity, to uſe *Montagne*'s Words, without conſidering or ſeeming to trouble his Head about it. The Author of his Life has not thought proper to ſay any thing on the Subject; but his Silence ſays enough.

Monſieur *de Saint Evremond* was ſo far from being affected at the Approach of Death, that, if I am not groſly miſinform'd, his natural Gayety redoubled the nearer it drew. He ſeem'd more pleaſant and facetious than uſual, and rallied agreeably concerning his approaching End. He told thoſe about him, *that he had a great Mind to reconcile himſelf*, which being interpreted in a devout Senſe, he explain'd himſelf, ſaying, *it was with his Appetite*. I can perceive with Pleaſure, in this Sally of Humour, the true Character of a voluptuous old Man.

They who have heard of Mademoiſelle *de Lenclos* won't be diſpleas'd to be made acquainted with a curious Particular relating to her. That charming Creature is a Proof that Libertiniſm and Delicacy of Taſte are not incompatible. She was, at

times,

times, Miſtreſs to many of the Court Lords; but far from being a Libertine, from Motives of Self-Intereſt, ſhe always behaved towards her Lovers with a Generoſity capable of adding to their Flame, and conſequently of increaſing their Pleaſure. All with whom ſhe had intrigued in her Youth, were ſo ſenſibly touch'd with her Diſintereſtedneſs, that they made her conſiderable Preſents when Age had ſtrip'd her of her perſonal Charms; and the Duke of *R*——— was not the laſt nor leaſt Munificent of her Benefactors.

What is very particular as to this univerſal Charmer, is, that the Life ſhe led was in Compliance with the laſt Deſires of her Father, who, in his laſt Moments, calling her to his Bed-ſide, and looking wiſhfully at her, ſaid, " Daughter, you " ſee that all that remains for me at " preſent is the melancholy Reflexion of " departing Pleaſures. My Poſſeſſion of " them was of no long Continuance, " which is the only Complaint I have to " make of Nature. But alas! how uſeleſs " are my Sorrows! But you who ſurvive " me, make the moſt of your precious " Moments; and be ſcrupulous only as

" to the Choice, but not as to the Num-
" ber of your Pleaſures.

My Information as to theſe Particulars, was, from a Man of Senſe, who aſſured me to have had it from Mademoiſelle *de Lenclos* herſelf; who ſo thoroughly knew the Value of a voluptuous Life, that ſhe was willing her Merit that way ſhould be known to the World.

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## CHAP. XIII.

### *Additions to the Ninth and Eleventh Chapters.*

THE very naming *Machiavel* inſtantly awakes the Idea of a refin'd Politician. From his earlieſt Youth he aſſiduouſly apply'd himſelf to that Science which forms a Stateſman, as if Nature had laid him under the Neceſſity of becoming perfect in it. This ardent, natural Deſire he had of excelling in that Knowledge, induced him to ſift the Actions of Princes and Miniſters of State, and dive into all the Depths of the Cabinet, in order to come at the true Springs of their Actions. 'Tis no wonder, that after ſo painful

painful a Study, ſuch a penetrating Genius as *Machiavel*'s ſhould have ſhin'd. His Works clearly ſhew and diſtinguiſh between the ſeveral Duties of the Sovereign and Subject; tho' I wont ſay, that he is always a Slave to natural Equity.

*Florence* was the Place of his Birth; but being naturally reſtleſs and a Republican, he could not reliſh the Sovereignty newly acquir'd by the Family of *Medicis*. But the very Appearance of Diſcontent muſt have ſeem'd hazardous to one of leſs Senſe than *Machiavel*. For at that Time Men were puniſh'd on the ſlighteſt Suſpicions, and often capitally; and a Superiority of Genius was thought a Ground for Suſpicion.

However reſerv'd and diſcreet *Machiavel* might have been, the Opinion conceiv'd of his ſuperior Parts was like to coſt him dear. He was believ'd to be Author of a Conſpiracy againſt Cardinal *Julie* of *Medicis*, for which he was flung into Priſon, where he remain'd ſome Months; nor did he obtain his Liberty but by the Loſs of his Fortune, which was confiſcated by way of Commutation for his ſuppoſed Crime. After that he gave a full Looſe to his Prejudice for the new Tyrants. Being a rigid Philoſopher, he took Pride in his

Misfortunes; and being a finiſh'd Satiriſt, he laugh'd at the Follies of the World. Even Death, which he look'd for with Impatience, ſeem'd to him a new Subject of Raillery. Herein he was more determin'd than the famous *Aretin*, who, tho' he had been the Buffoon all his Life, durſt not be ſo in his laſt Moments; and fell into the rankeſt Bigotry.

Bigotry is ſo much the Weakneſs, or rather the Diſeaſe of a certain Age, that even Great Men, with all their Arts and Induſtry, have much ado to diveſt themſelves of it. *Pericles*, tho' endow'd with uncommon Strength of Judgment, finding the Phyſicians had deſpair'd of him, he had recourſe to magical Incantations and Bandages, "Judge, ſaid he to a Friend "who enquired after his Health, of the "piteous State I am in by the Train which "ſurrounds me. I muſt be very ſick in-"deed, ſince I am become ſuperſtitious". —I ſhould think Man to be conſummately dextrous, could he diveſt himſelf of organical Impreſſions: But has he Strength of Mind enough for that?

We will make a Tranſition to the Death of *Buchanan*, wherein we ſhall probably find more Reſolution than in that of *Pericles*; tho' to take theſe laſt

Words

Words of that renowned *Greek* in a certain Senſe, they might be reliſh'd by the Curious. *Buchanan* wrote with great Politeneſs; and his Hiſtory of his own Country, is, in its kind, one of the fineſt modern Productions we have. Monſieur *de Thou* was wont to ſay of him, *That it was wonderful how a Man bred in the Duſt of the Schools ſhould ſo well underſtand the Intereſts of Princes and States.*

*Buchanan* was a *Scotchman* by Birth. He left his Country in a tender Age, but return'd to ſpend his latter Days there, after having remain'd the beſt of his Years abroad. The Fame of his Merit ſoon procur'd him a conſiderable Eſtabliſhment at Court; where he ſcarce had Time to taſte its Pleaſures when he was ſeiz'd with a ſlow Fever, which carried him to the Grave. He was not frighten'd at the Approach of Death: For a Philoſopher determines himſelf ſo much the eaſier in quitting the World, that he is indifferent as to exterior Objects. In all the Courſe of his Diſtemper he would take no Phyſic, contenting himſelf with the ſecret Operations of Nature, which he obſerv'd with great Aſſiduity. As he had no Opinion of Phyſicians, he bade them open

Defiance; in ſo much, that being told by them, in his laſt Moments, that Wine was Poiſon in his Condition, he call'd for a Glaſs of the richeſt, which he held in his Hand till he died, repeating the following Elegy from *Propertius*.

*Cynthia prima ſuis miſerum me cepit ocellis,*
*Contactum nullis ante Cupidinibus.*
*Tum mihi, &c.*

Should the Public ever declare in Favour of ſuch as die as they liv'd; that is, who expire with Sentiments ſuitable to their Taſte and Genius, *Buchanan* will paſs for having died a true Toper, and the famous *Lais* for having made her Exit like a true Courtezan.

*Lais* was one of thoſe privileg'd Beauties which Nature produces but rarely. She was conſtantly waited on by a Crowd of choice Lovers, who paid dearly for her minuteſt Favours. Skilful in the Art of captivating the Heart, ſhe vanquiſh'd even Philoſophers, a fierce, untractable Generation, who unwillingly yield to Love. But Wiſdom itſelf is forced to ſtoop to the Addreſs of a finiſh'd Coquette. We can't miſtake in judging how *Lais* employed

employed her Time. As a fine Woman, her Thoughts were bent on the Embelliſhment of her Perſon; and as a triumphant Vanquiſher ſhe added daily to her Charms. And even old Age, commonly attended by Cares and Sorrows, was unable to put a Stop to the Carreer of her Pleaſures; nor even Death, for ſhe expir'd in the Midſt of them. Let me be excus'd for not expatiating on this laſt Part of my Subject.

It can't be doubted, that *Ovid* had alluded to the Death of *Lais* in writing theſe Lines, which had ſlipt from a Pen unincumber'd with Diſcretion:

*O utinam Veneris poſſem langueſcere motu!*
*Cum moriar, medium ſolvar & inter opus.*

## CHAP. XIV.

*Remarks on the dying Words of King* Henry VIII. *of* England, *and the Count* de Grammont, &c.

THE Religion of Kings is very different from that of the Public, tho' ſeemingly it is the ſame. As the Common-

alty are inattentive, incapable of Examination, and Superſtitious, they are eaſily ſeduc'd: And their Propenſity to Novelty and Eagerneſs in purſuit of the Marvellous and Abſtruſe, frequently put them upon ſeeking after Untruth. Naked Truth, ſtrip'd of thoſe alluring Ornaments which ſurprize the Fancy, tires and even ſhocks them ſometimes. But Kings on the contrary, look on Religion as Part of their Inheritance, which they may alienate or alter at will. Bred up with theſe Notions, they ridicule the Ignorance of their Subjects., and ſport with their Credulity. How miſerable is the Condition of thoſe who obey! They are moſt groſly deceiv'd; and to crown their Unhappineſs, are forced to a ſeeming Reſpect for the vileſt Seducers.

Religion has been productive of great Extravagancies in moſt Countries. Such is its Deſtiny, that it is capable of furniſhing comical and often fantaſtic Scenes, with which Infidelity ſports itſelf. Being a Friend to Reaſon, it ſubmits not to thoſe ingenious, fine-ſpun Paſſions ſo uſeful to Politicians. For Ignorance only is capable of approving of thoſe great Revolutions which reſult from the Contrarieties

of

of religious Opinions. Theſe great Changes ſeem to me to be founded moſtly in Ambition or Revenge: and to theſe may be juſtly imputed that grand religious Revolution which happen'd in *England* in the Reign of *Henry* VIII.

That Prince was born a Great Man; tho' of Opinion that he ſhould ſhape his Conduct rather by the Light of his own Reaſon than that of others. Such a Perſwaſion is accompanied with a Kind of Vanity, which equals even true Reſolution. *Henry* VIII. being given over by his Phyſicians, call'd for a Glaſs of white Wine; and whilſt he held it in his Hand, cry'd out mockingly, *all is loſt*. Theſe Words, which he continued expreſſing till he expired(*a*), (*is a Proof of Deſpair rather than Reſolution.*)

As

(*a*) *Temoignerent overtement l'averſion qu'il avoit pour les moines, gens vils, intereſſez & haiſſables par la baſſeſſe de leurs mœurs* evidently demonſtrated his Averſion for Monks, a mean ſelf-intereſted Generation, that are odious for the Baſeneſs of their Manners.

*N. B.* The Reader will eaſily perceive the Neceſſity of this Note, and of ſubſtituting other Words in the Room of the Author's

As for Indifferency towards Monks, the Count *de Grammont* was not far behind hand with *Henry* VIII. Allured by the Sweets of a voluptuous Life, he ſcorn'd to be inſtructed in the different religious Opinions of Man, which to him ſeem'd deſpicable on account of their Extravagancy. The (*a*) King being no Stranger to his Irreligion, and inform'd of his Danger, ſent the Marquis *de Dangeau* to excite him to die a good Chriſtian. Every Age has its Taſte and Maxims peculiar to it—But to return to the Count *de Grammont*; tho' he was in his Agony when Monſieur *de Dangeau* preached to him by Order of the King, he turned to his Wife, who was truly devout, ſaying, *Counteſs, if you don't take care,* Dangeau *will rob you of the Honour of my Converſion.*

Monſieur *de Saint Evremond* was ſo raviſh'd with the Beauty of that laſt Sally of Wit and Humour, that he would have given the World to have been the Author of it. For it is obſervable, that the

There can be no Connexion between King *Henry*'s ſaying, *all is loſt,* and having an Averſion for Monks.

(*a*) *Lewis* XIV.

the greateſt Wits don't ſhew the moſt Reſolution in their laſt Moments; which ſhews how much we have to fear from any Diſorder in our Machine.

*The good Man, des Yvetaux*, ſo called by the lovely *(a) Ninon*, ſeeing his End, order'd a Saraband to be play'd to him, *that his Soul*, as he phraſed it, *might take its Flight more gayly*. He muſt be truly ſenſible of the Value of Life who ſacrifices not a Moment of it to either Grief or Fear.

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## CHAP. XV.

### *Additions to the Hiſtory of the* FRENCH *Academy.*

THERE are few Works that ſhew the Genius and Beauties of the *French* Language ſo much as the Pleadings of Monſieur *Patru*. His Eloquence, which is equally free from Dryneſs or Affectation, is always maſterly, nervous, and ſuſceptible of new Ideas. And probably he had been deem'd a conſummate Orator,

*(a)* Mademoiſelle *de Lenclos*.

Orator, if he had had the Art of pleading ſucceſsfully. He always ſlighted the Smiles of Fortune, Favours ſo difficult to be obtain'd by the Guiltleſs; and moderate in his Deſires, he was contented with a Competency, and liv'd independent.

Monſieur *Patru*, in his laſt Moments, was viſited by Monſieur *Boſſuet*, Biſhop of *Meaux*, who preſs'd him in the moſt obliging, and, at the ſame time, the moſt ſeducing Manner poſſible, to act the laſt Scene of the Play after the Chriſtian Manner. To which the dying Man anſwered; "Sir, you have been deem'd till now, a "Man of ſtrong Senſe; think of diſabu- "ſing the Public, by ſpeaking ſincerely "and religiouſly—But it is more neceſſa- "ry that I ſhould be ſilent: for, ſaid he "with an Air of Jeſt, in theſe laſt Mo- "ments no Man chatters but thro' "Weakneſs or Vanity.

There are certain religious Grimaces, as well as political, to which the Dying are often forc'd to ſubmit: And thereby are conſiderable Communities ſupported, and many great Societies enrich'd. One might eaſily place their Craft in a certain Point of View, which would appear extremely ridiculous. The late Preſident

*R*——let theſe adroit Gentry know, an Hour before he expir'd, in what Light he view'd them, when he told a Prieſt who employed much Rhetorick in exhorting him to think of Eternity: *Sir, you will be paid, but pray let me die quietly.*

I find more Singularity in the Death of Monſieur *Peliſſon*, ſo well known by his Hiſtory of the *French* Academy. He had been Secretary to the famous Monſieur *(a) Fouquet*, and was involved in his Misfortunes. But the Intereſt of his Friends, his own perſonal Merit, and more eſpecially his Reputation of a Wit and fine Genius, procur'd his Enlargement from the *Baſtile*. Such Favours are very rare at Court, where eminent Poſts are extremely hazardous.

In his later Days Mr. *Peliſſon* employed himſelf wholly in religious Controverſies; a dry, difficult, illuſive Study. He wrote againſt the *Calviniſts*, and tritely enough, tho' without Succeſs, which is generally the Fate of all Diſputes about Religion. What ſurprizes me moſt is, that ſo zealous an Advocate for the Catholick Religion,

(*a*) *Fouquet* was Super-Intendant or High Treaſurer of *France*, and was diſgraced and confin'd for Life, by *Lewis* XIV. for Peculation.

ligion, while he was in Health, ſhould ſhew no Signs, in his laſt Moments, of his being of that Faith. On the contrary, he declar'd, *that to that Moment he acted from Motives of Policy*—Nothing is more deceitful or ridiculous than to ſuppoſe that Men always write as they think, or always think as they write.

## CHAP. XVI.

### *Of* Gaſſendi's *Death, and that of the celebrated* Hobbes.

THERE is a certain auſtere and ſavage Philoſophy which I don't eſteem. If it delights in Wiſdom, 'tis not ſo much for its own Excellency, as for the moroſe Severity that accompanies it. This ſort of Philoſophy draws a Man from the Commerce of the World to immerge him in chimerical Speculations. Every Thing that is ſimple and natural gives it Diſtaſte; and even Truth, with the Admirers of this ſort of Learning, loſes Part of its Merit.

It was this Species of Philoſophy which was in Vogue with *Diogenes*, *Chryſippus* and

and other eminent Humouriſts and Man-haters of Antiquity. By too intenſely ſeeking after Truth, they got beyond it: And, whether it may be thought a Paradox or no, I dare venture aſſerting, that a Man very often becomes a Fool by the very Means he takes to improve in Wiſdom. A ſound Judgment is the beſt Remedy againſt ſuch Miſtakes. But above all others, let us do Juſtice to *Epicurus*, who ſo well knew how to reconcile Voluptuouſneſs to Reaſon. There is ſomething extremely agreeable in that Science or Art which teaches the taſting thoſe Pleaſures with Delicacy, which the Vulgar enjoy clowniſhly.

*Gaſſendi* is my Favorite among all the modern Philoſophers; and none has ſet the Opinions of *Epicurus* in ſo amiable a Light. Being learned without Harſhneſs or Severity, and polite from Nature, he produces Phyſic, or natural Philoſophy, for no other than what it really is, that is, obſcure, dubious, and often erroneous. But he recommends moral Philoſophy in another Manner; as being that which determines the Value and Uſe of Pleaſures; wherefore it ſhould be the Science which Man ſhould ſtudy moſt.

Tis

'Tis ſurpriſing that Man ſhould neglect improving himſelf in the Art of living agreeably, and buſy himſelf ſo much about uſeleſs Trifles. *Gaſſendi* piqued himſelf, not at all on the Superiority of his Knowledge, not even on his own Diſcoveries in Nature. And, in his laſt Moments, he ſhew'd too viſibly that he was of Opinion he had ſpent his Time leſs uſefully than he might. Some few Hours before *Gaſſendi* expir'd, he ſeem'd uncommonly penſive, which being obſerv'd by a Friend who was come to ſee him, he aſk'd him what he thought on: To which the dying Man reply'd, after taking notice that they were alone; *I know not how I came into the World, why I came into it, or why I am to leave it.* How ſhall one reckon upon the Ignorance of a Man that ſtudied arduouſly for forty Years together? Such Ignorance however, tho' it may want of the Glare of more preſumptuous Knowledge, is not always unaccompanied by Solidity and Truth.

We will now change the Subject, and treat of *Hobbes*, one of the brighteſt Genius's of *England*. He thought very freely, and expreſs'd himſelf very boldly. His beſt Works are particularly diſtinguiſhable

ſhable by the deciſive Manner in which he expreſſes himſelf. Being an Enemy to Superſtition, he abhorr'd all who attempted to propogate popular Credulity; and above all others, Theologiſts were his Averſion. He deſpis'd equally their Notions, which he thought extravagant, and their Conduct, which he thought ridiculous.

Can any thing be more ſhameful, or inſpire a meaner Idea of human Kind, than the ſeeing an almoſt infinite Number of People in the World, whoſe ſole Buſineſs is to invent Chimeras, and propagate Error?—But to return to *Hobbes*; he alter'd not his Way of thinking in the greateſt Severity of the Illneſs he died; of unconcern'd at the Approach of Death, he look'd over with great ſeeming Satisfaction ſeveral Epitaphs his Friends had compos'd for him; and fix'd on the following with great Gayety of Spirit; *This is the Philoſopher's Stone*, alluding, we ſuppoſe, to Death.

As his Pains increas'd, and he was going to give up the Ghoſt, he cry'd out, *I am going to take a great Leap in the Dark.* Thus does all our Thoughtfulneſs terminate in Uncertainty. How comical it is, that

that Man ſhould think himſelf knowing enough, when he is thoroughly convinced of his own Ignorance!

*Hobbes* had his Weakneſſes, but particularly one, remarkable enough in a Man who ridicul'd all popular Prejudices; which was, that he dreaded being alone, particularly at Night; ſuch was his Apprehenſion of Spirits and Witches. How can a Man, after this, pretend to give an exact Definition of a Wit?

## CHAP. XVII.

### *The Character of the Abbot* Bourdelot.

THE Art of Rallying with Delicacy is extremely difficult. 'Tis the moſt agreeable Band of Society, to which none attain but thoſe of an excellent Taſte. 'Tis circumſcrib'd with no Rules or Method, being founded in Nature alone. There is no doubt, that it communicates to the Mind a certain ſprightly Politeneſs which ſupports Converſation, and prevents its becoming languid and cold, eſſential Defects which generally take their

Riſe from ſome extravagant Buffoonry, or inſipid Raillery.

The Abbot *Bourdelot*, ſo well known in *France*, happily avoided both theſe Extremes. He was Phyſician to *Chriſtian* Queen of *Sweden*, at the Time that ſhe took the Whim of ſeeing all the learned Men of *Europe*. A particular Oddity in a reaſonable Princeſs. The Abbot ſpared not thoſe who came to Court incumber'd with the Stiffneſs of the Schools, and Auſterity of the Cloſet. They were the conſtant Subject of his Raillery; and particularly the learned *Samuel Bochart*, and the famous *Iſaac Voſſius*, who had intirely loſt among their Books, that Elegance of Mind ſo neceſſary to Society. 'Tis commonly the Imperfection of thoſe who apply to the lighter Study of the *Belles Lettres*, to deſpiſe the more ſerious and profound Sciences: And perhaps not without Reaſon, the Refinement of the Mind being preferable to fruitleſs Knowledge and crabbed Studies.

After a conſiderable Stay at the Court of *Sweden*, of which being probably tired, the Abbot *Bourdelot* returned to *France*, and attach'd himſelf in a particular Manner to the Prince of *Condé*. He was known

to

to and esteem'd of all the Learned of *Paris*, who frequented his House as the Mansion of Freedom. They met there once or twice a Week, and were for the most part entertain'd by the Master of the House with uncommon Wit and Delicacy. He died with the same Disposition of Mind, having preserv'd his natural Vivacity to the last.

The Curate of the Parish he liv'd in hearing of his Illness, came to exhort him to prepare himself for another Life. But the Abbot, little pleas'd with his Zeal, and shock'd at the Grossness of his Expressions, pray'd he would talk to him in *Latin*. The Curate, tho' surprized at the Novelty of the Thing, thought it proper to comply, and quoting a Passage from *St. Austin*, the Abbot, tho' just expiring, turn'd to him, saying, *How, Sir, can you approve of such Language? My Ears are shock'd at the Grossness of that* African's *Expressions*—I dare not determine concerning the Propriety of the Repartee from a dying Man; but methinks the Superstitious are not proper Judges.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XVIII.

### *Remarks on ſuch as have compos'd Verſes in their laſt Moments.*

THE World has never been without Poets, but there have been very few that have expir'd in the Arms of the Muſes; as if theſe ſprightly Nymphs had ſhunn'd Man, or that he thought them unfit Companions in his laſt more ſerious Moments. But the Emperor *Adrian* was of another Opinion. Aided by the Lights of Philoſophy, which he rever'd and practis'd even on the Throne, he ſaw Death approach without Emotion, and compos'd theſe fine facetious Lines an Hour before he expir'd.

*Animula, vagula, blandula*
*Hoſpes, comeſque corporis,*
*Quæ nunc abibis in loca,*
*Pallidula, rigida, nudula?*
*Nec, ut ſoles, dabis jocos.*

In *French*, by Monſieur *de Fontenelle*.

*Ma petite ame, ma mignone,*
*Tu t'en va donc, ma fille, & Dieu*
*Sache où tu vas;*
*Tu pars ſeulette, nue & tremblotante, helas!*
*Que deviendra ton humeur folichonne?*
*Que deviendront tant de jolis ebats?*

Imitated by Mr. *Prior*.

*Poor, little, pretty, fluttering Thing,*
*Muſt we no longer live together?*
*And doſt thou prune thy trembling Wing,*
*To take thy Flight thou know'ſt not whither?*
*Thy humorous Vein, thy pleaſing Folly*
*Lies all neglected, all forgot:*
*And penſive, wav'ring, melancholy,*
*Thou dread'ſt and hop'ſt thou know'ſt not what.*

One may eaſily perceive by theſe Lines, in ſpite of *Adrian*'s Gayety, that he had not thoroughly reconcil'd himſelf to the Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul. He was ſkilful enough to doubt, but dare not examine why he doubted. And thus it happens frequently, that Men, by being over ſollicitous concerning religious Belief, come at laſt to believe nothing.

It

It would ſeem that the Doubtfulneſs of the Learned is founded on the ſame Principles which ſerve to ſettle and convince the Illiterate.—But I fear I have ſaid too much on ſo delicate a Subject. There are certain Errors in the World which have a Right to be propagated in ſpite of Philoſophy: And they are ſo much the more to be dreaded, that moſt Men lay it down for a Law to themſelves not to oppoſe them.

From the Imperial Poet let us proceed to ſome wedded to the Muſes by Profeſſion, who merit a Place in theſe Collections. The firſt who preſents himſelf to my Mind is *Eliſius Calentius*, a celebrated Poet at the Court of *Alphonſus* King of *Naples*. He wrote with great Delicacy and Politeneſs; and wrote for his Diverſion only.

Never was any Man better qualify'd to be thoroughly happy, being of an Humour to be ſatisfied with whatever ſhould happen, and never be ſolicitous for tomorrow: Poverty being the neceſſary Conſequence of ſuch an indolent Diſpoſition. *Calentius* was poſſeſſed of none of the Goods of Fortune, except the Character of a fine Genius and Wit: And the fol-

lowing Epitaph, which he compoſed for himſelf, in his laſt Agonies, evidently proves his Title to that Character.

*Ingenium natura dedit, fortuna poeta*
*Defuit, atque inopem vivere fecit amor.*

That Poet's Character could not be better expreſs'd than by theſe ingenious Lines; but how applicable are they to moſt others of the Profeſſion? *Paſſerat*, for inſtance, had no other Fortune but a Reputation which he acquir'd at a vaſt Expence of Study and Labour. He would not be at the Pains of accumulating Wealth, which he deſpis'd as much as he was an arduous Admirer of Learning. How repugnant to modern Sentiments! In our Days there are but few capable of comprehending that any thing is preferable to Riches. This is ſo true, that he who dare attempt publickly to give the Preference to Learning, would certainly be deem'd a Lunatick.

But as to *Paſſerat*, he had a fertile and happy Genius; and his Works ſhine equally with the Vivacity of the Orator, and Softneſs of the Poet. He was one of thoſe *Hominum Venuſtiorum*, mention'd by

by *Catullus*, ſo extremely difficult to be deſcrib'd in our Language. This Difficulty is unkown to none who have read this Author, and are ſo unfaſhionable as to be charm'd with the Beauties of the *Latin* Tongue.

*Paſſerat*'s Genius leading him to Raillery, in which he excell'd, he continued that Humour to the laſt, as appears by theſe Lines, which were the Fruit of his laſt Moments.

*Jean Paſſerate, icy ſommeille*
*Attendant que l'ange l'eveille ;*
*Et croit qu'il ſe reveillera*
*Quand la trompette ſonnera.*

*S'il faut que maintenant en la foſſe je tombe,*
*Qui ai toujours aimé la paix & le repos,*
*Afin que rien ne peſe à ma cendre & mes os,*
*Amis de mauvais vers ne chargez ma tombe.*

*Here ſleeps* John Paſſerat, *waiting to be wak'd by the Angel, and believing he will, when the Trumpet ſounds. If I, who delighted ſo much in Peace and Quiet, muſt now drop into the Grave, let it be ſpar'd by the Admirers of bad Verſe, that no Weight may lie on my Duſt and Bones.*

The Delicacy of *Paſſerat*'s Taſte is herein very diſtinguiſhable. He would not be prais'd indifferently; and he knew the Difficulty of a refin'd Panegyric. But probably it was in thoſe Days as in ours, when no ſooner a Great Man dies, but all the Dunces of *Parnaſſus* mangle his Character.

But of this Number let us not include old *Melin de Saint Gelais*, who will appear, by his Adieu to his Lute, to have been an Exception. I am miſtaken, or the Reader will be oblig'd to me for the Inſertion of a Piece which ſo perfectly points the Diſpoſition of the Author in his laſt Moments.

*Barbite, qui varios leniſti pectoris æſtus,*
*Dum juvenem nunc ſors, nunc agitabat amor,*
*Perfice ad extremum rapidæque incendia febris,*
*Qua potes, infirmo fac leviora ſeni.*
*Certè ego te faciam ſuperas evectus in oras*
*Inſignem ad citharæ ſidus habere locum.*

*You, my Harp, who have ſo often compos'd the anxious Tumults of my Breaſt, when I was plagued with Love, and many other Diſturbances in my younger Days;*

go

*go on with me to the laſt, and now I am grown old and weak, do you mitigate and cool theſe feveriſh Heats under which I labour. And as a Recompence of your Services, as ſoon as I am aſcended into the Regions above, I will procure you an eminent Place in the Conſtellation of the Harp.*

It does not ſeem to admit of any Doubt that *Saint Gelais* had compos'd theſe Lines almoſt juſt as he was expiring. Naturally gay, and intent to ſtifle Ideas unſuitable with his Temper, he could not do it more effectually than by throwing himſelf into the Arms of the Muſes, who baniſh Cares and Melancholy with refin'd Addreſs. There is no Man ſcarce can cultivate their Intimacy without almoſt forgetting his Rationality, and being plung'd in a happy, ſoothing Delirium.

But who can ſay that the Pleaſures reſulting from an Imagination ſo overheated, are not the moſt exquiſite and refin'd? The famous *Ronſard* perceiving his End at hand, began to compoſe a Copy of Verſes for a Miſtreſs he had long loved. The Thought ſucceeded, for he expir'd without perceiving it. Whatever may be thought, thoſe who

moſt excel in Wiſdom are not the moſt ſuſceptible of Happineſs.

## CHAP. XIX.

*An Examination of ſome curious Inſcriptions.*

THERE are certain Profeſſions in the World, which, in their very Nature, ſeem deſpicable, and yet they who excel in them are generally eſteem'd. Who can take upon him to reconcile ſo whimſical an Abſurdity to common Senſe? The Buſineſs of a Courtezan is odious, yet *Rhodope* and *Phryne* appear'd with Eclat in their own Countries, where it is probable a virtuous Chaſtity had never rais'd them as Lewdneſs did to general Applauſe. Aſſured that their Profeſſion would be always in high Eſteem with Mankind, they look'd upon themſelves as having a Right to tranſmit their Names to Poſterity by Means of pompous Monuments and Inſcriptions. An odd Conceit! So thin is the Partition between

tween the Senſe and Folly of Man, that it was thought above two thouſand Years ago we ſhould be ridiculous; and who paſs'd this diſpleaſing, but juſt Sentence upon us? Two S——p——ts, become vain and arrogant from being followed, careſs'd and applauded.

But we ſhall find no leſs an Indignity offered to Poſterity by a powerful Monarch. *Darius* I. King of *Perſia*, commanded, as he was expiring, that the following remarkable Words ſhould be grav'd upon his Tomb: *I could drink much Wine, and be ſober.* Muſt not a Man have preſum'd too far on the falſe Taſte of his Fellow-Creatures, that could hope to acquire their Eſteem by ſuch an Inſcription? Or is it that the Diſpoſition of Mankind is ſuch, that overgrown Vice is preferr'd to moderate Virtue? *Darius* was a Drunkard by Profeſſion, and knew not how otherwiſe to recommend himſelf.

We have had ſome Men, famous for Penetration, who ſeem'd ambitious of eternizing their Fame. Several great Mathematicians, particularly, have been careful, even in their laſt Moments, to order that their Diſcoveries ſhould be announc'd to Poſterity by Inſcriptions. *Archime-*

*ges* and *Ludolphus* of *Cologne*, and the eldeſt of the *Bernouilli*, were of this Number. But ſcorning to eſtabliſh a fruitleſs and undeſerved Reputation, they contented themſelves with a bare Inſertion of their moſt uſeful Diſcoveries.

Mathematicians ſeem to be the only Men in the World who are not indebted to Chance. Their Reſearches are infinitely laborious. But the learned Men in other Sciences make much more Noiſe, tho' they take far leſs Pains. Might it not be an Injury to their Vanity, if none of their Productions ſhould be admir'd but ſuch as they pilfer'd from others?

## CHAP. XX.

### *Of great Men who had maintain'd their natural Gayety, even on the Scaffold.*

THE Reſolution of many renowned Criminals who are publicly and capitally puniſh'd, often proceeds from a furious Deſire of preſerving the Remains of a dying Reputation. There is I know not what of falſe Glory which ingroſſes their

their Minds ſo as to leave no Room for the Impulſes of Nature. The Tragic Poets ſeem to have been well acquainted with this ſort of Firmneſs of Mind. They inſpire their dying Heros with an Air of Fierceneſs and Intrepidity, which ſeems to redouble at the Remembrance of their paſt Greatneſs, and at the Approach of certain Death.

Let the Crime be what it will, we ſee by Experience, that the laſt Sufferings of Criminals are commiſerated, and that they among them who die couragiouſly are applauded. The Firmneſs therefore of ſuch unhappy Great Men is Self-Intereſt, as being the laſt Homage they can pay to Virtue. And very often ſuch Homage is compulſary, and therefore merits no Applauſe. I very much miſtruſt the Virtue of thoſe Sentiments, which departing from Nature, affect a Sublimity which is generally intermixed with the Ridiculous. To be unnatural and ridiculous are pretty near the ſame thing, or at leaſt are as near Neighbours as Madneſs and great Wit.

But the Courage which merits Applauſe moſt in my Opinion, is that of ſuch as ſee with Calmneſs the Approach of

the moſt exquiſite Torments. Their Indifference ſeems to me preferable to the vain Firmneſs of thoſe Heros who vamp and inſult, and triumph as it were over their Misfortunes. Give me a Man who preſerves the natural Gayety of his Temper when he believes his Death at Hand and his Puniſhment inevitable. I admire an *Engliſh* Chancellor, who continued his Jeſts after he had heard that the Warrant for his Execution was ſign'd. The Reader will eaſily perceive that I mean Sir *Thomas More*, one of thoſe illuſtrious Men who fall Victims to their own diſtinguiſh'd Merit. 'Tis often a Misfortune for a Man to think, but particularly to ſpeak differently from the Vulgar. Ignorance, which can't bear the ſhining Excellencies of Great Men, degenerates into Jealouſy; and Jealouſy never fails of Invention, in order to cut off the hated Object, where real Proof is wanting. Of this there have been many Inſtances in the laſt Century, wherein thoſe who embrac'd new religious Opinions were puniſh'd with the utmoſt Rigour. Unhappy Times! which can't well be reconciled to Humanity, or the Laws of Honour. Weak and erroneous as Man is by

by Nature, what Right has he to oblige his Fellow-Creatures to think as he does?

The only Crime alledged to *Stephen Dolet*, who ſuffer'd at *Paris* in 1546, was his Attachment to *Calviniſm*, which was then in its Infancy. His Judges, either prejudic'd or ill-inform'd, condemn'd him, and he was burnt for being a Heretic. But the Approach of ſo torturing a Death abated not the natural Gayety of his Temper; for in his Way from Priſon to the Place of Execution, he conſtantly rallied thoſe about him, quite unattentive to a *Franciſcan* Friar, who walk'd cloſe by him, and inceſſantly preach'd Compunction to him. Probably he was not affected by the Monk's Elocution.

Since his Time there was another learned Man burnt for Atheiſm at *Toulouſe*, who preſerv'd his Gayety to the laſt, as well as *Dolet*. This was the learned *Lucilio Vanini*, diſtinguiſh'd among modern Wits. He was accus'd of having taught privately and inculcating an Indifference for all Religions, was tried and condemn'd to the Flames by the Parliament of *Toulouſe*. In the midſt of his Torments he cried out with an audible Voice, *The Author of your Faith is ſaid to have dreaded Death,*

*but I fear it not.* Thus did he end a Libertine Life; but I mean a Libertiniſm of Sentiments only, to which the moſt virtuous among the Ancients were addicted. How indifferent about Religion were *Ariſtides*, *Phocion*, *Socrates*, and all the other Great Men of thoſe Times, who are noted for being ſternly virtuous? After ſuch Examples, who can ſay that Infidelity in Matters of Faith is always an Indication of Debauchery?

I mentioned *Phocion* in order to quote his laſt Words. He was a Man ſignally diſtinguiſh'd for the Rigidneſs of his Virtue; yet was he condemn'd to die by his Fellow-Citizens. In his Way to the Place of Execution, a young *Athenian* Coxcomb having ſpit in his Face, he ſaid to the Magiſtrates who conducted him, *Adviſe that young Man not to open his Mouth ſo diſagreeably another Time.* The World, it ſeems, was as ridiculous in *Phocion*'s Days as in *Boileau*'s, wherein he juſtly ridicules the Folly of accompanying Convicts to the Scaffold with Pomp and Ceremony.

Let us now draw nearer to the preſent Age, and conſider the preceding, in which the famous Cardinal *Richelieu* liv'd. That Miniſter, ſkilful in that Art of Go-

vernment

vernment, which always ſuppoſes an elevated Genius, knew how to take Advantage of the Weakneſs of a Prince with a narrow Capacity, in order to indulge his own particular Paſſions. For certainly the Glory of his King, and Good of the State were not always the Motives of his Actions. But be that as it will, the Duke *de Montmorency*, Meſſieurs *de Thou* and *de Saint Marc*, *&c.* ſuffer'd Death with great Reſolution. Theirs could not be excell'd by the moſt haughty Heroiſm. But I admire Monſieur *de Thou* moſt, who had the Reſolution to compoſe his own Epitaph, and the Duke *de Montmorency*, who, in a Letter to his Lady, wrote with the Tenderneſs and Paſſion of a Lover. A Man muſt be ſomething more than a Great Man to be able, in thoſe terrifying Moments, to compoſe himſelf ſo thoroughly. In ſhort, he muſt know how to ſport with Death.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XXI.

### *An Extract from ſome of* Montagne's *Thoughts.*

I Read thoſe Authors with Pleaſure, who produce themſelves naturally in their Works. Little Affectation is obſerv'd in ſuch Productions, but much of that ſprightly, agreeable Manner which charms all that are touch'd with native and artleſs Beauties. *Montagne* wrote without Art or Study; he appears before the Public quite in his Undreſs. He wrote ſimply, but affectingly; and tho' he ſeems to have been convinc'd of the Malignity of the Heart of Man, yet for all that he pleaſes, and even exacts Love and Eſteem, which few Authors are ſo happy to do.

I cannot ſay whether *Montagne* died merrily, but it would ſeem that he was of a Diſpoſition to do ſo. " Never, " ſays he, did any Man prepare himſelf " more coolly and thoroughly to quit " the World; never was Man more " compos'd and reſign'd. The Thought

" of

" of Death gave him no more viſible
" Concern than any other. Death he
" call'd the only Haven of Security
" from the Miſeries of this Life, the
" ſovereign Good of Nature, the Support
" of our Freedom, and the common and
" ſpeedy Remedy againſt all Evils.—
With Sentiments ſo generous as theſe,
'tis no wonder he ſhould ſay, *that it was the ſame whether Man put an End to his Life, or permitted it; or whether he ſet out to meet Death, or waited for its coming.*—But ought ſo very ſhort a Journey as that between Life and Death, be look'd upon as a Matter of any Conſideration? After ever ſo little Reflexion, muſt not a Man admit that the Thing is of the moſt trivial Conſequence?

*Montagne*, in a hundred Places of his Eſſays, ſpeaks advantageouſly of a merry Death, *interlarded with Buffoonry.* In the Fortieth Chapter of his firſt Book, he ſpeaks thus of Death. " How many do
" we ſee dragg'd to a ſhameful, and of-
" ten a moſt painful Death, who, whe-
" ther thro' Simplicity or from the Ef-
" fects of Courage, face it without
" Dread or Emotion? One perceives no
" Change in them. They calmly ſettle

" their

" their domeſtic Affairs, recommend
" themſelves to their Friends, exhort the
" Standers by, often ſing and laugh, and,
" like *Socrates*, drink to their Acquaint-
" ance. One of theſe merry Fellows
" cry'd to the Officer who was conduct-
" ing him to the Gallows, *Take care we*
" *don't go thro' ſuch a Street, for a Shop-*
" *keeper there, to whom I am indebted,*
" *may probably lay Hands upon me.* Ano-
" ther told the Hangman he muſt not
" touch his Neck, being extremely tick-
" liſh, for fear he ſhould burſt out in
" Laughter. A third told the Divine
" who attended him, and who, by way
" of Encouragement, told him he ſhould
" ſup with the Lord that Night: *Fa-*
" *ther, you may go yourſelf, for I faſt to*
" *Night.* A fourth, aſking for Drink,
" and the Hangman, who preſented
" him the Cup, having taſted the Liquor,
" he refus'd it, ſaying, *I am afraid to*
" *catch the foul Diſeaſe, if I ſhould drink*
" *after him*, &c. Among ſuch mean,
" low Creatures, there have been ſome
" who have continued their gay Buffoon-
" ry even in expiring. This was the
" Caſe of him who ſung, *Let the Galley*
" *row*, his uſual Song, juſt as the Hang-

" man

" man had turn'd him off."——The Remainder of the Chapter deſerves to be read.

## CHAP. XXII.

### *If there be Valour in Suicide?*

THE World is often too laviſh in beſtowing the Epithet of *Great* on undeſerving Men, whoſe Brutality paſſes for Virtue, becauſe they have the Art to diſguiſe it. The ingenious Author of the *Art of thinking*, ſays, *that ſince Valour commonly extinguiſhes all Knowledge or Reflexion of Danger in the Soul, it ought to paſs but for a Mechanic Virtue.* Wherefore, as that of Heroes may not improperly be deem'd conſtitutional, it may be ſaid that they owe their Fame more to Temperament than Reaſon.

On this Suppoſition, in order to become great, a Man has nothing elſe to do but to lay violent Hands upon himſelf. And who ſo likely to become great, by this ſort of Heroiſm, as thoſe that are preſs'd moſt by the Weight of Misfortunes?

But

But would not this be raiſing a Reputation on a very ſandy Foundation? A Man weighed down with Cares and Sorrows can have but little Reliſh for Life. On the contrary, Death to ſuch a one would be a Gift, let it come from what Hand it will. I remember to have read, that the Count *de G——*, when our Army was paſſing the *Rhine*, clap'd a Piſtol to Monſieur *D——*'s Breaſt, who was juſt flouncing into the River; *Drowning would be a Happineſs to one ſo immers'd in Debt as you are; but pay me the two thouſand Louis d'Ors you owe me, and then you may attempt the Paſſage of the River as ſoon as you will.*

This was reproaching a Man with Delicacy, who was courageous from Neceſſity, and whoſe Valour was the pure Effect of his Deſpair. This deſperate Officer reſembled not that *Roman* whoſe Bed *Auguſtus* had ordered to be purchas'd for him, ſaying to one of his Courtiers, who wondered that his Imperial Majeſty would give Orders for purchaſing a Moveable of ſo little Value, *habenda eſt ad ſomnum culcita illa, in qua ille cum tantum deberet dormire potuit*; inſinuating, that there muſt be ſome extraordinary Quality in a Bed,

Bed, wherein the Owner could ſleep, being ſo overwhelmed with Debts as he had been.

There never was any Country wherein ſo many had laid violent Hands on themſelves as *Rome*. The *Romans*, more than any other People in the World, diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the Severity of their Courage; ſeeming not to have ſufficiently weighed the Difference between the Impulſes of Heroic Virtue, and the Severities accompanying a fierce or ſavage Diſpoſition. This juſt Obſervation on the Genius of the *Romans* is finely exemplified by Monſieur *de Saint Evremond*, in his critical Remarks on that People.

I confeſs however, that there may be certain Inſtances wherein Suicide might be not only pardonable but glorious. But Death on theſe Occaſions ſhould be accompanied with certain Circumſtances untinctur'd with either Brutality or Deſpair. The Conduct of a certain *Sophiſt* mentioned by *Suetonius* pleaſes me highly. His Patience being quite exhauſted, and his Strength wholly impair'd by a continued painful Diſtemper, he had himſelf carried where the People were aſſembled, to inform them with his Reaſons for precipitating his own

own Death. His Reſolution was admir'd and approv'd.

*Seneca*, the Tragedian, attempts to eſtabliſh the Right which Man has over his Life. We are born with this Right, and therefore may be ſaid to be a Prerogative which ſets us above Nature itſelf. Let us hear *Seneca* on the Subject.

*Ubique mors eſt, optimè hoc cavit Deus.*
*Eripere vitam nemo non homini poteſt,*
*At nemo mortem, mille ad hanc aditus patent.*

*Death is every where, and this by the wiſe Appointment of Providence. Every Man may take away the Life of another, but no Man can hinder his dying; for Death has a thouſand Ways by which he attacks and deſtroys.*

Is it not an Injuſtice to deem a Man a Criminal for having precipitated his End? But are all Laws conſiſtent with Juſtice or good Senſe; and are they not varied according to the Genius of different Nations? There was a certain poiſonous Liquor formerly prepar'd at *Marſeilles* at the public Expence, to be given to ſuch as wanted to die. And at *Rome* he was deem'd a Hero who had the Courage to

lay violent Hands upon himſelf. *Brutus* and *Caſſius*, the illuſtrious Murderers of *Julius Cæſar*, have been reckon'd the laſt of the *Romans*. And perhaps in beſtowing that exalted Epithet upon them, their Courage to make away with themſelves, might have been more in View than any other Virtue.

Let us ſincerely confeſs then, that the Ideas of Virtue and Vice are not a little confus'd, and even chimerical. They ſuppoſe an equal Share of Vanity and Ignorance, two Rocks which human Underſtanding is too liable to ſplit upon.

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## CHAP. XXIII.

### *Of ſome Particulars relating to the foregoing Subject.*

MEN in the general grow whimſical, and are guilty of many Abſurdities in their laſt Moments. Wits are often ingroſs'd by Religion, and Philoſophers become either Fools or Madmen. Sir *Francis Bacon*, ſo well known by his curious Treatiſes for the Re-eſtabliſhment

of

of the Sciences, died very unlike a Man of Senſe. We are inform'd by *Sorbiere*, that tho' he died not worth a Groat, he bequeath'd by his Laſt Will above a hundred thouſand Pounds in Legacies. He order'd about a third Part of this great Sum to be laid out in building and endowing a College, of which he had form'd an imaginary Plan in his Mind. 'Tis a melancholy Thing that Man can't be ſure of continuing reaſonable to the End.

I don't know whether *Scarron* behaved in his laſt Moments, as may be expected from one of his Genius; or rather whether he treated Death with that burleſque Air ſo natural to him. But if we may believe *Menage*, he had the good Fortune of putting *Pluto*'s Subjects into a merry Humour. And ſure we may rely on the Truth of his Information, ſince Poets are bound by no Obligations but ſuch as are dictated by Fancy.

*Deliciæ procerum, tota notiſſimus urbe,*
*Veneras ad Stygias Scarro facetus aquas.*
*Solvuntur riſu, mæſtiſſima turba, ſilentes:*
*Hic jocus & luſus, hic lacrimans veneres.*

*When*

*When facetious* Scarron, *whom the Nobility and every Citizen were highly delighted with, arriv'd at the River* Styx, *the Shades, tho' otherwiſe a very grave and ſorrowful Company, burſt out a laughing; and Jokes, Diverſions and Gayeties immediately ſpread through the whole Place.*

The following Lines, wrote by *Baif*, one of our ancient Poets, on the Death of *Rabelais*, are on the ſame Subject, and in my Opinion more natural.

*Pluton, prince du noir empire,*
*Où les tiens ne rient jamais,*
*Reçois aujourd'hui Rabelais,*
*Et vous aurez tous dequoy rire.*

Pluto, *Sovereign of the Shades below, whoſe Subjects never ſmile, receive* Rabelais, *who comes to-day to viſit you, and he will make you all laugh.*

As far as we know the Dead are a People mighty full of Reflexions, and very apt to moraliſe, in ſo much that they forget what it is to laugh or be merry. And if ſo, *Scarron* and *Rabelais* were the propereſt, perhaps the only that could inſpire the Inhabitants of the gloomy

Shades with Mirth. As for that excellent Comedian, *Moliere*, who ſo well knew how to blend Wit and Humour together, he died almoſt on the Stage, in playing the Part of a *feign'd ſick Man*, in one of his own *(a)* Comedies. The Thought of one of our *Latin* Poets concerning the Death of *Moliere*, was prettily imagin'd. There is ſomewhat delicate and uncommon in ſaying, *that Death was ſhock'd to ſee that the Player dared to mimick it.*

*Roſcius hic ſitus eſt triſti Molierus in urnâ,*
*Cui genus humanum ludere, ludus erat.*
*Dum ludit mortem, mors indignata jocantem*
*Corripit, & mimum fingere ſæva negat.*

The illuſtrious *Moliere* had a good deal of that ſort of happy Genius which is adapted to Comedy. No Man knew Mankind better, and none expoſed their Weakneſſes more energically or beautifully. He had the Art of giving new Turns and Graces to the moſt common Thoughts, in which, and indeed every other Perfection, he equall'd at leaſt the moſt celebrated of the ancient Comic Poets.

Tho'

*(a) Maladie imaginaire.*

Tho' *Moliere* was much addicted to Pleaſure, he was for all that a Philoſopher; but his Philoſophy was not of the ſtiff ſtarched Kind; it was ſuch on the contrary, as inclin'd him to deſpiſe Life, even when he had it moſt in his Power to enjoy it.

The Syſtem I would eſtabliſh is founded on this ſort of Philoſophy; in ſhort, 'tis founded on the Light of right Reaſon, which directs Man not to diſcontinue his natural Gayety in dying.

# THE APPENDIX.

## OBSERVATIONS on the Death and laſt Sayings of ſeveral ancient Heathens.

THALES ſaid there was no Difference between Life and Death, and perhaps this might be his Reaſon, *that both of them were equally according to Nature, nor was Death a greater Evil than our Birth.* But when a certain Perſon put him this Queſtion; *Why don't you die then?* He ſmartly made anſwer, as

as *Pyrrho* did, *becauſe Life and Death are equally indifferent.*

*Bias* ſaid to one who, upon having loſt his Children, invoked Death to take him; *Why doſt thou invoke Death, ſince thou know'ſt that he will come to thee unaſk'd?*

*Diogenes* being aſk'd whether Death was an Evil? How can that, ſays he, be an Evil, which, when it is preſent with us, we are not ſenſible of it? But that which is abſent can be an Evil to no Man. While Man is ſenſible, he is alive, and Death cannot be then preſent: But when it is preſent, Senſe is gone. But that is no Evil which is not perceiv'd.——— This Manner of Reaſoning is imputed by ſome to *Epicurus.*

The ſame Philoſopher, *Diogenes*, hearing that *Antiſthenes* was dangerouſly ill, and through a Fondneſs for Life, was extremely caſt down upon it, went to make him a Viſit, having a Dagger under his Cloak. *Antiſthenes*, on ſeeing him, ſaid, Ah! what is there that will rid me of theſe Pains? Upon which the *Cynick* drew out his Dagger, ſaying, Here, my Friend, is that will do it effectually. But, reply'd the ſick Man, I

ſaid I wanted ſomething to rid me of my Pain, not of my Life.

It was anciently the Cuſtom, when the Rich among the *Ægyptians* made an Entertainment, for a Perſon appointed for the Purpoſe, to preſent a Skeleton of Wood to each Gueſt, ſaying, " When " thou drinkeſt, and art making thyſelf " merry, look upon this, thou who wilt " be juſt ſuch another after thou art dead". The Hiſtorian's Obſervations on this Cuſtom is, " That it was doubtful what " was their Deſign by it, whether that " being mindful of their Mortality, they " might obſerve a Moderation in their " Enjoyments, or whether that know- " ing they muſt ſoon die, they might " indulge themſelves the more fully in " them". — Our Author, in his Account of *(a) Trimalcion*'s Feaſt, inclined to the latter Opinion; but the firſt being more conſiſtent with Rationality, leaving Religion out of the Queſtion, 'tis ſcarce doubtful that ſo wiſe and abſtemious a People as the *Ægyptians* were, intended that the thoughts of Death ſhould prevent Exceſs.

*He-*

(*a*) Chap. II.

*Heraclitus* ſaid, *That Death was at all Times conceal'd in all Men*; which Thought is finely expreſs'd by the late juſtly celebrated Mr. *Pope* in his Eſſay on Man.

*As Man, the very Moment of his Breath,*
*Receiv'd the lurking Principles of Death;*
*The young Diſeaſe that muſt deſtroy at length,*
*Grows with the Growth, and ſtrengthens with the Strength:*
*So,* &c.

When *Anaxagoras* was explaining to his Hearers the Cauſes of the Operations of Nature, and in the midſt of his Diſſertation had an Account brought him of the Death of his Son, he paus'd a While, and then ſaid, *I knew when I begot my Son, I begot him a Mortal.*

*Socrates* being in a declining State of Health, and taken very ill, was aſk'd by a Viſitor, how he did? To whom he made this Anſwer; "It will be very "well with me whether I live or die. "If I live, I ſhall have ſtill more Perſons "to emulate me: If I die, I ſhall have "ſtill more to praiſe me.

The ſame God-like Man, hearing that he was condemn'd to die, ſaid to his Judges, "Gentlemen, I have great "Hope that it will be well for me that "I am condemn'd to die. But it is "Time for me to be going that I may "die, and for you that you may live.

*Theramenes*, after the *Ephori* had paſſed Sentence of Death upon him, went away ſmiling; and being aſk'd by ſome preſent, *If this was in contempt of the Laws of the* Spartans? "By no means, "ſaid he, but I rejoice rather, becauſe I "am obliged to pay a Fine which I "never made any other Perſon pay, and "which I never borrow'd from any".— Alluding, it is ſuppos'd, by thoſe ſoft Expreſſions, to the Cruelty of his Judges, who condemn'd him unjuſtly. And perhaps he might be willing to ſhew that he dreaded not Death, by calling it a Fine only.

*Chrabrias* being accus'd of Treaſon, along with *Iphicrates*, was rebuk'd by the latter, for going, when he was in ſo imminent Danger, to the *Gymnaſium*, and dining at the uſual Time. *Chrabrias* reply'd, "I do it for this Reaſon, that if "the *Athenians* ſhould pronounce us

"guilty,

" guilty, they may kill you when you " are ſtarving and dirty, but me, after I " have dined, and when I am clean and " well dreſs'd.

*Phocion* being with ſome worthy Men condemn'd to Death by the *Athenians*, when the Executioner brought the Poiſon, and all having drank except *Phocion*, and there being no more left, he told *Phocion* he would give him none, unleſs he paid down twelve *Drachmas*, which was the Price of a Doſe of Poiſon. *Phocion* upon this, that his Death in ſo good Company might not be delay'd, call'd to one of his Friends, ſaying, " My Friend, ſince " I cannot die *gratis* at *Athens*, I beg you " will give the Executioner his Price.

*Rubrius Flavius*, when he had revolted from *Nero*, was taken Priſoner, and ſoon condemn'd to Death: And being at the Place of Execution, exhorted by the Executioner to ſtretch out his Neck with Courage, *I wiſh*, ſaid he, *you may give the Blow with equal Reſolution.*

*Gorgias* being very weak, and near his Death, fell now and then into a Sleep; and if any of his Family aſk'd him how he did; *Sleep is now beginning to deliver*

*me*

*me up to his Brother*; alluding to Death, whom he call'd the Brother of Sleep.

*Epaminondas* being mortally wounded by the Thruſt of a Spear, in the Battle of *Mantinea* againſt the *Lacedemonians*, would not permit the Head of it to be pull'd out of his Fleſh till he heard that the *Thebans* he commanded had obtain'd the Victory. Then he exulted, ſaying, *Pull out the fatal Weapon, for now is the End of my Life; or rather let me ſay more truly and heroicly, that it is the Beginning of it. For ſuch a glorious Death as this is the Birth of* Epaminondas.

After a Life the moſt voluptuous that can be well imagin'd, *Epicurus* the Philoſopher died of the Stone in the Bladder, the moſt acute of all Pains; yet in the midſt of his ſharpeſt Agonies he order'd himſelf into a hot Bath, where, calling for Wine, he expir'd, in recommending to his Friends to live as voluptuouſly as he had done.—I wonder our *French Epicurean* would omit this Account of the Principal of his own Sect.

When a certain *Greek* had an Account brought him that his Father was dead, he told the Meſſenger who brought the

News,

News, *take care thou talk'ſt not blaſphemouſly, for my Father is an Immortal.*

*Gorgias* being aſk'd if he was willing to die, ſaid, No; I have no great Inclination to die, but ſhould be very glad to get out of this decay'd Cottage, which is juſt ready to fall upon me.

King *Philip* of *Macedon* ſaid to *Demoſthenes*, who ſo virtuouſly oppoſed his Influence at *Athens*; Are you not afraid, leſt I ſhould order your Head to be ſtruck off? No, ſaid the Orator; for though you ſhould remove it from its Place, my Oratry will beſtow upon it Immortality.— As well might he have ſaid his *Virtue*; for unleſs *Oratry* have *Virtue* for its principal Object, it deſerves not to be immortaliz'd.

*Coriſcus*, when he was very old, having recover'd from a very dangerous Illneſs, ſaid, I am very much concern'd that I am come back, after having proceeded a little in that Journey, which every one is under a neceſſity of taking.

*Chilon* order'd that the Dead ſhould not be ſpoke ill of, and gave this Reaſon for it; becauſe it ſeem'd cowardly to reproach ſuch as were unable to anſwer for them-

themſelves; and ſhameful to engage one's ſelf with Shades and Phantoms.

After a certain *Spartan* Woman had buried her Son who died in Battle, a Neighbour came to condole with her, Saying, alas! poor Creature, how great is thy Misfortune! 'Tis quite the reverſe of what you ſay, anſwered the heroic Mother; I reckon Fortune to have been propitious to me, ſince the very End for which I bore my Son is now accompliſh'd: For I bore him that he might die for *Sparta*.

A Citizen of *Liege*, in the Time of the immediate Predeceſſor of the late Prince and Biſhop of that See, having irritated his Prince by too warm a Zeal for the Rights and Liberties of his Country, of which he was a ſtrenuous Aſſerter, and the foremoſt to withſtand any the leaſt of Encroachment by the Sovereign or his Miniſters, ever ready to ſacrifice the Intereſt of their Country to private Lucre: This Patriot, I ſay, was condemn'd to loſe his Head for having oppoſed the Incroachments of the Court. But paſſing under a flat Arch, reaching from the Palace to the Square before the Cathedral of *St. Lambert*'s, the Place of Execution,

Execution, the Prince ſaw him from his Apartment, and ordered him into his Preſence. After having tax'd him with Contumacy, and a Deſign to raiſe a Rebellion in the State, the Prince told him, if he would recant and acknowledge his Guilt, he would yet ſhew him Mercy. To which the brave Citizen made anſwer, *That if the Defence of his Country's Freedom was reckon'd Criminal, or deem'd Rebellion, he could not anſwer for his Innocence or Loyalty, ſince he would never deſert his Country for the Liberty of wearing out a few more pair of Shoes.* Which reſolute Anſwer ſo irritated the Prince, that he was order'd to immediate Execution, and accordingly he ſuffered with exemplary Reſolution and Piety, exhorting the Standers-by with his laſt Breath, *to guard againſt the Encroachments of the Court, the Arts of Miniſters, and Ambition of Princes.*

*F I N I S.*